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**TACKLING SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN PERIPHERIC CITY  
NEIGHBORHOODS THROUGH HOLISTIC SOCIETAL  
TRANSITION:  
A DYNAMIC PERFORMANCE GOVERNANCE APPROACH**

*An application to the cities of Palermo and Baltimore*

**LA DOTTORESSA  
NOEMI GRIPPI**

**IL COORDINATORE  
Chiar.mo Prof. SALVATORE MANCUSO**

**IL TUTOR  
Chiar.mo Prof. CARMINE BIANCHI**

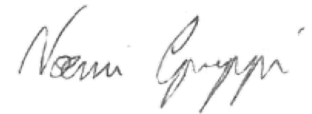
**I CO-TUTOR  
Chiar.mo Prof. ANTONIO PERRONE  
Chiar.ma Prof.ssa PAOLA MAGGIO**

CICLO XXXVI  
ANNO CONSEGUIMENTO TITOLO 2023

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*Declaration*

I, Noemi Grippi, hereby affirm that I am the exclusive author of this doctoral dissertation. This thesis represents an original piece of work that was submitted to the University of Palermo in 2023.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Noemi Grippi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a distinct loop at the end of the last name.

## *Dedication*

This doctoral thesis is dedicated to my parents, Gabriele Grippi and Nunziella Consolo. Thank you for your infinite understanding and support. You raised me with love, and kindness, and tenacity to make me the person I am today. I hope to make you proud one day of who I am and what I will become. I would also like to thank my grandparents and my other relatives, whom I love so much.

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Love you 3000.

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TACKLING SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN PERIPHERIC CITY NEIGHBORHOODS  
THROUGH HOLISTIC SOCIETAL TRANSITION: A DYNAMIC PERFORMANCE  
GOVERNANCE APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of this research is to address the wicked problem of social exclusion by means of fostering collaborative initiatives involving different stakeholders (e.g., citizens, non-profit organizations, public sector entities, and businesses) to enhance holistic societal transition. By engaging in collective action and pooling resources, stakeholders may tackle the multifaceted challenges associated with social exclusion, thereby fostering a more inclusive and equitable society. Also, this study additionally examines the concept of social exclusion within the framework of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Indeed, the Agenda places a high value on inclusivity and equality, with a strong commitment to ensuring that no one is left behind. It acknowledges that social exclusion not only perpetuates poverty but also has far-reaching implications for several interconnected problems, such as access to employment opportunities and education. From this perspective, it is possible to see how social inclusion is integrated into multiple Sustainable Development Goals. In this sense, social exclusion can be viewed as a barrier to sustainable development, which aims to build a more equitable and inclusive world for all. This research aims to undertake an in-depth parallel analysis of two distinct neighborhoods, namely San Filippo Neri in Palermo (Italy) and the Middle East in Baltimore (United States of America). Such neighborhoods are currently struggling with the multifaceted issues of social exclusion and gentrification.

By delving into the intricate dynamics and socio-economic and cultural complexities of these neighborhoods, this research seeks to shed light on the various factors contributing to the residents' marginalization. It frames the intricate interplay of socio-economic factors, urban planning policies, and historical contexts driving social exclusion to foster a holistic transition under a socio-economic and cultural perspective through collaborative governance. Such an approach fosters coordination, cooperation, and collaboration among different stakeholders and therefore brings a wider range of perspectives and expertise to be taken into consideration while dealing with wicked problems such as the one at hand.

Furthermore, this research highlights the important role played by active citizenship in collaborative settings. Active citizenship refers to the active involvement of residents in their communities, beyond mere passive participation. It entails citizens taking on proactive roles

in decision-making processes, contributing with their knowledge, skills, and experiences to shape policies and initiatives. It adopts a mixed-method research design, which encompasses both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. This methodological approach has been chosen to ensure a holistic and nuanced understanding of the research topic at hand. By integrating diverse data collection techniques, such as interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, the study aims to capture different and nuanced perspectives and insights.

A Dynamic Performance Governance approach was adopted to frame the main cause-and-effect relationships driving social exclusion. This approach considers various intangible resources, such as trust, collaboration, and governance capacity, which play pivotal roles in achieving sustainable outcomes. By incorporating these critical elements, the DPG approach provides a robust and holistic perspective on performance governance at local level to foster an outcome-oriented view toward resilience. Following the presentation of the two DPG charts for both neighborhoods, causal loop diagrams were constructed to visually represent the feedback system's structure. It highlighted how these characteristics and contextual elements were used to build an outcome-oriented and dynamic performance perspective of social exclusion in peripheric city neighborhoods. Then, this research concludes by resuming the main findings and looking at the role that place-based collaborative platforms may have in fostering holistic resilience towards wicked and super-wicked problems by enhancing a socio-economic, cultural, and ecological transition.

**Keywords:** Social Exclusion; Peripheric City Neighborhoods; Holistic Transition; Collaborative Governance; Dynamic Performance Governance



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## List of Acronyms

BRACE – Baltimore Redevelopment Action Coalition for Empowerment

CHRWG Citizens Housing and Relocation Working Group

CLD – Causal Loop Diagram

EBDI – East Baltimore Development Inc.

EU – European Union

DPM – Dynamic Performance Management

DPG – Dynamic Performance Governance

HOLC – Home Owners' Loan Corporation

IACP – Istituto Autonomo Case Popolari

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

NGOs – Non-Governmental Organizations

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

SD – System Dynamics

SMEAC – Save Middle East Action Committee

PEEP – Piani di Edilizia Economica Popolare

UCLG – United Cities and Local Governments

UN – United Nations

UNECE – United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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## CHAPTER 1

### RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND DESIGN

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the research design employed in this study. It encompasses the formulation of hypotheses, research questions, problem statement, significance and rationale for the research, as well as the theoretical framework, and the study's scope.

The research hypotheses pertain to the investigation of social exclusion in peripheric city neighborhoods, as well as the challenges associated with urban development and regeneration. Additionally, the research aims to address the imperative for socio-economic and cultural transition to enhance resilience towards wicked and super-wicked problems.

#### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

The concept of social exclusion emerged in the 1980s as a response to the challenges posed by significant societal changes. Social scientists and policymakers sought to tackle different sets of problems arising from the ongoing socioeconomic and cultural transformations. Consequently, terms like social inclusion, social solidarity, and social cohesion gained popularity as they aimed to address the perceived breakdown of societies resulting from these broader developments (Atkinson & Hills, 1998, Atkinson & Marlier, 2010). In the late 1980s, there was a shift in European policy-making circles regarding the conceptualization of poverty. It was no longer viewed solely as a state of economic deprivation, but rather as a component of a wider pattern of disadvantage known as social exclusion (Munck, 2005). The prominent characteristic of the new concept is the evident multidimensional nature of disadvantage. Exclusion can occur in research studies conducted within the framework of EU anti-poverty policies when individuals experience disruptions in their connection to multiple systems, such as the democratic and legal system, the welfare system, the labor market, and the community and family systems (Scharf et al., 2005). Social exclusion is often attributed to the consequences of economic crises, specifically the increase in unemployment and the uncertainty surrounding labor conditions. It is seen as a manifestation of the significant economic, technological, and social transformations that define the development of industrial societies (Atkinson, 2000; Coppola, 2009). Urban societies, known for their significant structural changes, often serve as focal points for the emergence of social exclusion. In European cities, this phenomenon is characterized by the aggregation of diverse groups experiencing exclusion, resulting in the creation of enclaves primarily inhabited by wealthy individuals. According to Atkinson and Hills (1998), there is currently

no universally agreed-upon definition for this concept, and there is a significant scarcity of reliable empirical data available for its identification or investigation. For other scholars, the concept lacks the ability to differentiate between various situations, resulting in an oversimplified depiction of a society divided into two distinct groups: those who are "in" and those who are "out" (Strobel, 1996, Coppola, 2009). This image depicts the city as a mosaic composed of segregated socio-spatial neighborhoods. These divisions have emerged due to market forces and the deliberate or unintentional outcomes of urban planning (Madanipour, Cars, and Allen, 1998; Coppola, 2009). Often, these neighborhoods are primarily characterized by blight, with inadequate living conditions and poor housing conditions. This negatively impacts residents' well-being and also reduces tax revenue for the city administration (Pough & Wan, 2017). Urban decay can worsen a range of interconnected societal issues, including social polarization, unemployment, urban abandonment, crime, and inadequate provision of essential social services (Amirtahmasebi et al., 2016; Branas et al., 2016; Pritchett, 2003). These factors contribute to the exacerbation of the issue of social exclusion (Omong, 2021).

The problem of social exclusion is contingent upon the context in which it arises and is influenced by various underlying factors (Murie & Mustard, 2004). In the United States, the discourse surrounding social exclusion is closely intertwined with the debate on racial segregation. During the early 20th century, the processes of industrialization and migration played a significant role in shaping the formation of distinct African-American ghettos and comparatively less segregated ethnic enclaves in northern cities. This phenomenon has been extensively discussed by scholars such as Cayton & Drake (1970), Myrdal (1944), and Massey & Denton (1993). Urban racial relations in the southern region are characterized by varying degrees of racial segregation and the implementation of Jim Crow regulations. In that time, cities were influenced by ongoing cycles of residential transformations. According to Burgess (1928), cities exhibit a distinct pattern of population movement, where people gradually move from the city center towards the suburbs due to various factors such as external forces and local community dynamics. This movement takes the form of waves of invasion, which can be understood as a process of succession. The process of succession involves the gradual and often unnoticed penetration of new residents into an area, followed by a reaction from the preexisting community. This reaction can range from mild resistance to more intense and even violent opposition. Ultimately, this dynamic leads to an influx of newcomers and the subsequent rapid departure of long-time residents from the area. The end result is the establishment of a new collective equilibrium which can be seen as the climax of this process. During the first half of the 20th century, in cities located in the Northern and

Midwestern regions of the United States, racial boundaries were often established through the implementation of restrictive laws. These covenants were utilized as a means of ensuring racial segregation, as exemplified by the legal residential segregation experiments that took place in Baltimore (Nightingale, 2006). Within the framework of a real estate market that exhibits a tendency towards duality, as described by Hoyt in 1939, the decisions made by individual White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASPs) and the larger white majority regarding residential options are influenced by a multifaceted combination of factors including race, class, and income. Among these factors, race appears to be the primary determining factor. Since the 1960s, there has been a nationwide impact of deeper structural processes on the patterns of residential segregation. During the 1970s, the urban environment experienced significant changes characterized by economic restructuring in rust-belt cities. This restructuring was marked by a decline in the manufacturing sectors and a simultaneous expansion of the services sector. Additionally, there was a notable increase in residential, retail, and economic suburbanization. Inner cities faced challenges such as population decline, decreased income, and fiscal instability. Furthermore, there was a relative increase in African-American access to the real estate market due to liberalization efforts. In the past, there emerged a distinct pattern of racial polarization in large and rapidly growing metropolitan areas. This polarization frequently manifested as a contrast between predominantly white and affluent suburbs and predominantly African-American and economically disadvantaged inner-city areas (Coppola, 2009).

In Europe, social scientists and policy makers began utilizing the concept of social exclusion in the 1980s to address an emerging set of problems stemming from significant transformations in societal dynamics. The French conception of social exclusion, in its various interpretations, is widely regarded as the predominant perspective in the European context. This perspective has a significant impact on the formulation of European policies, as noted by Silver (1996). The banlieue in France, characterized by recurring riots, has emerged as a prominent empirical example of social exclusion as an urban phenomenon. These new ghettos in the heart of continental Europe present an entirely novel set of challenges related to social and racial integration (Coppola, 2008; 2009). The social reorganization of urban spaces in European national societies varied significantly in terms of economic restructuring, labor market conditions, characteristics of the welfare state, immigration, and the built environment.

The notion of social exclusion and its urban ramifications have gained significant traction in Italy, despite the substantial disparities between the Italian context and that of other European nations. Italy exhibits important differences in terms of residential patterns, setting

it apart from other cities in continental Europe, both in terms of contemporary and historical aspects. During the 1970s, a significant influx of internal migrants played a pivotal role in the emergence of new manifestations of social exclusion (Coppola, 2008; 2009). Social exclusion is typically linked to political marginalization, residential segregation, and limited engagement in the labor market. The emergence of new urban marginality, primarily found in rapidly growing informal neighborhoods, has played a significant role in the city's disadvantaged position within the national economy. Additionally, it has contributed to the socioeconomic composition of the city, which is characterized by a dominant bureaucratic middle-class and a marginalized underclass (Ferrarotti, 1974; 1975; 1981). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, there was a prevailing focus on the impact of economic restructuring on urban societies in Italy and the subsequent increase in social vulnerability. In the southern regions of Italy, there has been a notable rise of impoverished neighborhoods, predominantly consisting of extensive public housing projects. These areas are marked by severe economic deprivation, widespread unemployment, familial instability, and disproportionately high levels of male incarceration. The presence of organized crime, specifically Cosa Nostra in Sicily and Camorra in Campania, has had a significant impact on these areas, turning them into what can be described as "radical heterotopias." These neighborhoods have become global hubs for various criminal activities, as highlighted by scholars such as Magatti (2007), and Coppola (2009).

This research adopts a perspective that regards social exclusion not as a collection of isolated problems but rather as a complex network of interconnected problems that span across different contexts within the system. The DPG framework enables us to look at social exclusion from two distinct perspectives. Firstly, it focuses on the possible transformation of shared resources into strategic resources that can be used to advance social inclusion policies. Furthermore, it underscores the significance of understanding the viability of desired outcomes within a context. This research investigates the potential of collaborative governance as a strategic asset for facilitating holistic neighborhood transition. Applying the Dynamic Performance Governance Framework has proven to be an effective approach in addressing social exclusion in peripheral city neighborhoods. By utilizing this framework, the goal of reducing social exclusion can be more easily achieved. The research also examines the strategies employed to promote and foster active citizenship through collaborative governance, with the aim of improving social inclusion.

## 1.2. Research objectives and questions

The main goal of this research is to show how Dynamic Performance Governance can help policy practitioners and decision-makers create sustainable policies for neighborhoods and urban areas. These policies aim to improve resilience against social exclusion. Additionally, the study examines how collaborative governance can contribute to addressing this issue and promoting a cultural transition.

To achieve its goals, the research pursued the following aims:

- Investigate the primary factors that contribute to social exclusion in peripheral urban neighborhoods;
- Illustrate how a Dynamic Performance Governance approach can be employed to promote sustainable policies that can enhance holistic resilience to wicked and super-wicked problems;
- Explore how collaborative governance may foster cultural change; and
- Demonstrate how a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to the UN 2030 Agenda may foster long-term sustainable and resilient outcomes.

To define and achieve the research goals that have been previously outlined, the following research questions have guided the present research:

- Why do some peripheral city neighborhoods' residents experience social exclusion?
- How it is possible to look at social exclusion through the lenses of the UN 2030 Agenda?
- How does collaboration among different stakeholders foster holistic resilience toward the problem at hand?
- What is the role that a Dynamic Performance Governance approach may have in fostering social inclusion in peripheral city neighborhoods?
- What is the role that a Dynamic Performance Governance approach may have in fostering socio-cultural transition and therefore holistic resilience?

To answer the outlined research questions and meet the above-mentioned research objectives, this research used semi-structured interviews to collect primary source of information among the main stakeholders (e.g., public & private sector organizations, non-profit organizations, citizens, neighborhood residents, etc.). The purpose of the questions in the questionnaire is to gather information from stakeholders regarding the factors driving social exclusion, collaboration, and holistic resilience with the intention of analyzing them in the context of existing literature. Moreover, an examination of the similarities and/or

differences in replies can be conducted to more accurately depict the true nature of the place in question. All interviewees were informed that the participation was entirely voluntary, that they could stop the interview at any time and that their responses will remain confidential.

Further data and information were collected through secondary source of information such as books, research works, laws and regulations, institutional websites, etc.

To conduct the research, it was adopted a Dynamic Performance Governance approach so to capture the existing the causal relationships of the problem at hand and enhance learning processes that may lead to resilience.

### **1.3. Justification and Significance of the Research**

The significance of this research sheds light on social inclusion, social exclusion, and segregation dynamics. Moreover, gives perspectives on the policy agenda and how it can be enhanced by the stakeholders' involvement. The research contributes to the sustainability and resilience field of research. Lastly, it highlights the important role that the Dynamic Performance Governance framework may provide in the field.

The research has implications for policy formulation and implementation by looking at the network of neighborhood-based interventions where stakeholders actively engage in collaborative initiatives to foster social inclusion and therefore produce public benefit for the local environment, specifically the communities, through participation.

This research also describes the Dynamic Performance Governance approach as an innovative approach that, by framing the cause-and-effect relationships driving social exclusion and collaborative governance, may assist stakeholders in finding collaborative solutions to achieve long-term results and foster resilience.

This demonstrates how an integrated system of management and governance can be organized at the local level. It can detect and promote coordination mechanisms among different local area administration departments. Additionally, it offers a method for effectively managing interorganizational collaboration at the local level. In summary, this research makes a valuable contribution to the existing body of literature on the subjects of collaborative governance and sustainability.

By comparing the literature on social inclusion and exclusion dynamics with the study's findings, theoretical conclusions can be drawn. In other words, theories of social exclusion, inclusion, social ecology, cultural and ecological transitions, collaborative governance, and sustainability are examined to decide which are most relevant to the study.

In light of an integrated approach to the SDG Agenda, the study examines in greater depth the role of socio-economic and cultural transition as a catalyst for fostering social inclusion.

#### **1.4. Scope of Study**

The present study encompasses an examination of two peripheral neighborhoods located in the cities of Palermo (Italy), and Baltimore (United States of America). The research focuses on analyzing various aspects of these neighborhoods, including their socio-economic conditions, demographic characteristics, and urban development patterns. By delving into the unique features and challenges faced by these peripheral areas, this study aims to contribute to the current existing knowledge by providing a deeper understanding of the dynamics shaping urban environments in different geographical contexts. The decision to select the San Filippo Neri neighborhood and the Middle East neighborhood as research sites was primarily driven by the prevalent and significant social exclusion phenomenon that their respective residents are currently dealing with. These two neighborhoods have been identified as areas where individuals and communities face substantial social exclusion and limited access to social, economic, employment, and educational opportunities. By focusing the investigation on specific neighborhoods, a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted challenges and complexities associated with social exclusion can be gained. This will enable the development of targeted interventions and policies to address these pressing problems. This research study effectively employs the valuable insights and perspectives garnered from the stakeholders who were interviewed, to comprehensively elucidate the intricate and interrelated challenges that impact the two neighborhoods under investigation. By leveraging the knowledge and experiences shared by these key individuals, the study aims to gain a deeper understanding of their respective roles in addressing and mitigating these multifaceted issues.

#### **1.5. Thesis Structure**

The present research is structured into six distinct chapters. In the first chapter of this work, emphasis is placed on the research objectives and their corresponding research questions. Additionally, the chapter delves into the justification and significance of the study, shedding light on the underlying motivations and reasons for undertaking this particular research endeavor. Furthermore, the chapter expounds upon the scope of the study, elucidating the boundaries and limitations within which the research is conducted. By exploring these key aspects, the first chapter sets the stage for the subsequent chapters, providing a solid foundation upon which the entire research is built.

The second chapter focuses on the literature on wicked and super-wicked problems. Additionally, an analysis is conducted on the United Nations' 2030 agenda and the localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Furthermore, the intricate concepts of poverty and social exclusion are addressed. By delving into these multifaceted subjects, this chapter aims to provide an understanding of the complex issues at hand. It also frames such problem through the lenses of the different SDGs and related targets. In addition to the aforementioned points, it is important to note that this chapter develops an in-depth analysis of the collaborative governance theory, situating it within the broader context of the transition from the traditional Old Public Administration model to the emerging field of new public governance. By examining this theoretical framework, the chapter aims to shed light on the intricate dynamics and complexities involved in the shift towards a more collaborative approach.

In the third chapter of this study, a comprehensive exposition is provided regarding the methodologies employed in the present study. This includes an in-depth discussion of the research design, data collection, and analysis techniques, as well as an examination of the ethical considerations that were taken into account. Furthermore, this chapter delves into the crucial aspects of sampling, encompassing the size, technique, and selection process, which were pivotal in ensuring the validity and reliability of the study's findings.

Chapter four of this work delves into an analysis of the San Filippo Neri neighborhood case study, shedding light on the intricate dynamics of social exclusion within this peripheral neighborhood in Palermo. A key component of this chapter is the inclusion of the Dynamic Performance Governance Chart, a conceptual framework that serves as a powerful tool for understanding and contextualizing the multifaceted aspects of social exclusion in this particular neighborhood. By employing this chart, the author aims to provide a comprehensive and nuanced examination of the various factors leading to social exclusion, thereby enriching our understanding of the complexities associated with this peripheral neighborhood.

In the fifth chapter of this study, an analysis is conducted on the Middle East neighborhood situated in the city of Baltimore. Building upon the groundwork laid in the preceding chapter, the author presents an examination of this particular neighborhood. In a style parallel with the previous chapter, the author employs a Dynamic Performance Governance Chart to effectively depict existing cause-and-effect relationships underlying the problem at hand.



The two aforementioned charts effectively depict comparable generic structures of stock-and-flow modeling, specifically focusing on the multifaceted factors that contribute to the emergence of social exclusion.

In the final chapter of this study, Chapter Six explores the main findings and conclusion. The chapter also focuses on the potential of place-based collaborative platforms to facilitate socio-economic and cultural transition, thereby enhancing holistic resilience in response to the predominant wicked challenges.

## CHAPTER 2

### FOSTERING RESILIENCE TO SOCIAL EXCLUSION

#### 2.1. Wicked Problems and Super Wicked Problems

Scholars from a variety of disciplines have emphasized for more than four decades the need to tackle the multiple challenges that social, distributional public policy problems pose for public administrations with more technical problems. There is a broad academic consensus that policymakers have significant difficulties when following traditional scientific-rational approaches to policymaking, and implementation when addressing complex challenges, including climate change, terrorism, and health care (Ackoff, 1974).

According to Ackoff idea:

“Every problem interacts with other problems and is, therefore, part of a system of interrelated problems, a *system of problems*... I choose to call such a system a *mess*... The solution to a mess can seldom be obtained by independently solving each of the problems of which it is composed... Efforts to deal separately with such aspects of urban life as transportation health, crime, and education seem to aggravate the total situation” (Ackoff, 1974: 21 as in Head & Alford, 2013: 713).

In the planning and design domain, the concept of "wicked problems" proposed by Rittel and Webber (1973) became widespread. They recognized that it was impossible to provide a unique and exhaustive definition of this concept because of its inherent complexity, dynamic, and multifaceted characteristics. Moreover, wicked issues are essentially unique, which means that, despite the existing similarities with other sets of problems or between a current problem and a previous one, there will be always distinguishing properties and characteristics that make them different from each other. Usually, a wicked problem can be considered a symptom of another set of higher levels of problems (Head & Alford, 2013). Moreover, it is possible to identify different discrepancies through the search for causal explanations. In the planning field to answer to wicked problems is not to find the truth but to improve the world situation. Policymakers in this perspective are liable for the consequences of the implemented solutions, in other words, the planner has no justification to make any mistake. And they have to consider non-standard ways of dealing with these wicked issues. Rittel and Webber (1973) recognized the necessity to solve these issues to have a holistic approach towards the problem understanding and resolution need to be jointly analyzed, and that there is no univocal interpretation based on the dichotomy true or false. Instead, the interpretation and the correctness of possible solutions relate to the judgments

of the affected stakeholders based on their value sets and their ideological inclinations. Any possible solution for wicked problems generates infinite consequences over time, and they cannot be fully understood until they have completely run out. Moreover, the solutions are often irreversible (Turner & Baker, 2019), they always leave traces, and every attempt to change or correct the unintended consequences may create other sets of wicked problems or exacerbate the existing ones, and usually cut across different policy areas (Christensen & Fimreite, 2006).

The existing body of literature presents a range of alternative approaches for addressing wicked and super-wicked problems. To address the inherent dynamic complexity and diverse governance layers associated with these problems, a suggested strategy would involve engaging various stakeholders, such as organizations from the public, private, and non-profit sectors, within a collaborative framework (Roberts, 2000; Ansell & Gash, 2008). Based on the literature, it is argued that effectively addressing wicked problems necessitates the active involvement of public authorities in engaging a wide range of societal stakeholders and non-governmental actors. This inclusive approach aims to incorporate diverse perspectives and values that are relevant to the problem at hand. Collaborative arrangements are widely recognized as essential mechanisms that provide access to fragmented and localized knowledge, mobilizing tangible and intangible resources, and establishing legitimacy by fostering a shared sense of purpose and collective responsibility for addressing common problems. The concept of knowledge is often characterized as being both shared and generated within collaborative environments (Feldman et al., 2006), thereby significantly broadening the potential to effectively tackle wicked problems. Some scholars emphasize the necessity of adopting a more discursive and inclusive approach to policy discourse when dealing with wicked problems. According to Fischer (1993), the phenomenon can be referred to as the "paradox of wicked problems," wherein expanding the participatory foundation of policy formulation is not a negative aspect, but rather a solution (Daviter, 2017). Collaborative governance is a mode of governance that is consensus-oriented, self-coordinated, and based on voluntary interaction and participation which contribute to fostering trust and creating consensus (Daviter, 2017). If collaborative public administration initiatives are not managed properly, a potential consequence could be a lack of efficiency and effectiveness. This aligns with Huxham's (2003) concept of "collaborative inertia."

## **2.2. The UN 2030 Agenda: Sustainable Development Goals**

The concept of sustainable development made its first appearance in the World Charter for Nature (UN, 1982) where it was strongly related to the ecological system and it was highlighted that the only path to preserve the socio-economic and cultural systems was by protecting nature and its resources. After this appearance the concept has been widely used in other important summits, charters, regulations, and agendas such as Our Common Future (WCED, 1987), the 40 Chapters of Agenda 21 on the Earth Summit in 1992 (UN, 1992), and by the United Nations Millennium Declaration (UN, 2000) that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), whose deadline was 2015.

Following this, in 2015, it was approved by the United Nations the Resolution “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (UN, 2015). This Agenda set 17 goals with 169 targets, and 232 indicators, which are universal and are focused on sustainable development in its broader concept thus including among the goals social, environmental, and economic aspects.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a substantial expansion and enhancement of the preceding goals. They place greater emphasis on crucial systemic factors that have historically impeded sustainable development. These factors include inequality both among and within nations, the degradation of the environment, unsustainable patterns of consumption, as well as inadequate institutions and governance structures. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provided a limited examination of the three dimensions of sustainability, namely social, economic, and environmental aspects. Additionally, the MDGs focused solely on developing countries. In contrast, SDGs encompass all countries and comprehensively address all dimensions of sustainability. However, it is acknowledged that the priority of different goals may vary across different territorial contexts (Sachs et al., 2019).

The inclusion of the issue of inequality holds particular significance. In the Millennium Declaration, equality was established as a fundamental value; however, the document did not specify the strategies and actions required to foster equality. The explicit objective of reducing inequalities within and between countries is highlighted as the tenth goal, accompanied by ten specific targets. This objective is driven by the recognition that the issue of inequalities extends beyond the most marginalized or excluded social groups and countries. Inequalities have detrimental effects on all individuals and societies as they diminish productive capacity, contribute to conflicts, undermine social cohesion, and jeopardize collective security. Consequently, it is imperative to address inequalities in their

diverse forms, encompassing relative deprivation, discrimination, and exclusion, which interact and amplify one another (Swain, 2018). The SDGs represent an advancement over the MDGs due to their inclusion of a comprehensive strategy for policy implementation. This strategy involves the activation of global networks comprising diverse public and private actors who engage in experimentation with transformative solutions. Additionally, the SDGs emphasize the utilization of digital technologies, ongoing monitoring of actions, and the opportunity for mutual learning from best practices. Furthermore, the adoption of models of good governance with active public participation, the involvement of innovative and socially responsible companies, and the promotion of an ethic centered on solidarity, transparency, honesty, and accountability are key components of the SDGs (Swain, 2018). The 2030 Agenda represents a comprehensive strategy designed to enhance the well-being of individuals, the environment, and economic growth, with the ultimate goal of fostering global peace and ensuring the preservation of fundamental liberties. The statement acknowledges that the elimination of poverty is the most significant worldwide obstacle and an essential condition for achieving sustainable development. In addition to the objective of eradicating poverty and hunger globally, the Sustainable Development Goals encompass endeavors such as combating inequality, fostering the establishment of peaceful, equitable, and inclusive societies, safeguarding human rights, advancing gender equality, empowering women and girls, and addressing unresolved issues (UN, 2015). The recently established UN Agenda is underpinned by the fundamental tenets outlined in the UN Charter, which emphasize the utmost adherence to international law. The concept is influenced by various international documents, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Millennium Declaration, the 2005 World Summit, and the Declaration on the Right to Development (UN, 2015).




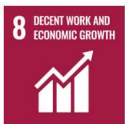

The 2030 Agenda acknowledges that individual nations bear the primary responsibility for their own economic and social development. It is intended to facilitate the allocation of financial resources and the dissemination of environmentally sustainable technologies to foster sustainable development. Public finance, both domestic and international, will be crucial in ensuring the provision of essential services and public goods. The private sector, ranging from small businesses to large multinational corporations, will be crucial in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Considering the various national contexts, capabilities, levels of development, as well as national policies and priorities, the goals are both comprehensive and inseparable, with a global reach and universal applicability. Each government establishes its own set of national objectives, which are influenced by the global level of ambition but also consider specific circumstances. It is important to comprehend the






connection between sustainable development and other pertinent economic, social, and environmental processes (UN, 2015; Walker et al., 2019).

The 2030 agenda for sustainable development comprises 17 interconnected and indivisible goals, these are portrayed in the table below.




*Table 1. Sustainable Development Goals short description (UN, 2015).*

Icons	Goal	Description
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goal 1</b> End Poverty in all its forms everywhere</p>	<p>The goal is to eradicate extreme poverty and mitigate relative poverty. Despite ongoing poverty reduction efforts, high poverty rates persist in various regions worldwide, indicating insufficiently effective measures to address the underlying structural issues, including economic and social inequalities.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goal 2</b> Zero Hunger</p>	<p>Addressing hunger and malnutrition. Despite some progress in addressing extreme hunger, food crises persist in various regions globally. Moreover, the issues of excessive food production and unequal food distribution persist as significant challenges.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goal 3</b> Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</p>	<p>The topic of good health and well-being is of great importance. Enhancing individuals' health and well-being. Despite advancements in healthcare, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of numerous nations' healthcare systems. Furthermore, a significant portion of the population lacks access to high-quality medical care and sufficient health services.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goal 4</b> Quality Education</p>	<p>Ensuring universal access to high-quality education. While education access has seen improvements globally, the issue of education quality persists as a significant concern. Furthermore, individuals facing poverty, armed conflict, and other challenging circumstances often lack access to education.</p>

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goal 5</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</p>	<p>Promoting gender equality to empower women and girls. Gender inequality remains prevalent globally despite ongoing efforts to address it. Gender discrimination and violence continue to be prevalent issues affecting women and girls.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goal 6</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ensure access to water and sanitation for all</p>	<p>Ensure universal access to clean drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities. While there have been improvements in the availability of clean water and sanitation in various regions, a significant portion of the global population continues to lack access to these essential services. Moreover, the provision of drinking water and sanitation frequently exhibits substandard quality.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goal 7</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy</p>	<p>Advocate for the adoption of renewable and readily available energy sources. Despite attempts to promote clean and affordable energy, the majority of global energy production still relies on non-renewable sources, namely oil and coal. Furthermore, there remains a significant lack of electricity access, particularly in certain regions.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goal 8</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work for all</p>	<p>Promoting the attainment of decent employment opportunities and fostering sustainable economic growth. Unemployment and precarious work remain prevalent in various regions worldwide, despite the presence of global economic growth. Persistent economic inequalities and the concentration of wealth among a small segment of the population continue to be significant issues.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goal 9</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation</p>	<p>The objective is to create sustainable infrastructure and encourage innovation and industrialization. Despite advancements in infrastructure and innovation, numerous regions worldwide continue to face deficiencies in infrastructure, while innovation tends to be concentrated in specific areas. Furthermore, the</p>

		process of industrial development frequently has adverse impacts on both the environment and human health.
	<b>Goal 10</b> Reduce inequality within and among countries	Addressing economic, social, and territorial disparities. Efforts to address inequalities, including economic, social, and territorial disparities, continue to be significant challenges in various regions globally. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated pre-existing inequalities.
	<b>Goal 11</b> Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable	The topic of focus is the development of sustainable cities and communities. Despite efforts to create sustainable cities and communities, the majority of cities worldwide still lack environmental, social, and economic sustainability. Furthermore, the process of rapid urbanization frequently gives rise to challenges such as traffic congestion, air pollution, and environmental degradation.
	<b>Goal 12</b> Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	Advocating for sustainable production and consumption. The current consumption and production model is unsustainable and gives rise to environmental and social issues, including pollution, natural resource exploitation, and waste generation, despite efforts to promote sustainable production and consumption.
	<b>Goal 13</b> Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact	Examining climate change and its impacts. Despite efforts to address climate change, greenhouse gas emissions are still rising, and the impacts of climate change are becoming more apparent globally. Furthermore, climate action frequently prioritizes technical solutions rather than effectively addressing the underlying issues of climate change.
	<b>Goal 14</b>	The objective is to safeguard and rehabilitate marine and coastal ecosystems. Despite conservation efforts, marine and coastal



	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources	ecosystems remain threatened by overfishing, pollution, ocean acidification, and climate change, which pose risks to their biodiversity.
	<b>Goal 15</b> Sustainable management forests, combat desertification, halt, and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss	The focus is on safeguarding and rejuvenating land-based ecosystems. Despite conservation efforts, terrestrial ecosystems are still at risk due to deforestation, desertification, habitat loss, and excessive hunting, which pose threats to terrestrial biodiversity.
	<b>Goal 16</b> Promote just, peaceful, and inclusive societies	Advocating for peace, justice, and the establishment of efficient and transparent public institutions. Corruption, violence, political instability, and conflict persistently undermine global peace, justice, and the functioning of transparent public institutions, despite efforts to promote these ideals.
	<b>Goal 17</b> Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development	Enhancing international collaborations to accomplish the goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda. Despite efforts to strengthen global partnerships, international cooperation often remains fragmented and limited. The poorest and most vulnerable countries encounter significant challenges in their pursuit of the objectives outlined in the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, affluent and influential nations frequently prioritize their interests, disregarding the well-being of the least privileged and most susceptible countries.

As shown in Table 1, the SDGs address various aspects of sustainable development, including the elimination of hunger and poverty, the promotion of gender equality, accessible education, the reduction of inequalities, the promotion of sustainable business practices, and the preservation of the environment. These principles are interconnected and inseparable, with a worldwide reach and broad implementation. Nations agreed to conduct a comprehensive and unrestricted evaluation of their achievements (Saner et al., 2020). A total of 169 objectives were identified and further categorized into 232 measurable indicators. These indicators were utilized for data collection and to assess the extent to which

the target was achieved. The objectives were formulated according to the SMART principle, which emphasizes specificity, measurability, achievability, relevance, and alignment with the year 2030 or an earlier timeframe. Indicators are aimed to serve as the foundation for monitoring progress towards the SDGs at various levels, including local, national, regional, and global.

The successful realization of the 2030 Agenda is predominantly carried out at the national level; nevertheless, the attainment of the SDGs is heavily contingent upon advancements made at the local level. To date, there has been a lack of emphasis on the implementation at the subnational level.

Policymakers should recognize the growing interdependencies between the global and local levels. Policymakers often use aggregate, sectoral, and static approaches to address complex challenges within a multilevel governance framework, despite the inherent interconnectedness of the wicked problems underpinning the UN 2030 Agenda. However, the lack of consistent local implementation often follows the development of macroscale and static plans by international institutions and states. Therefore, it is imperative to prioritize SDG localization, as it is recognized as a crucial process for promoting global sustainable development (Perry et al., 2021).

### **2.2.1. SDGs localization**

Localizing the SDGs involves examining the intricate nature of different regions and circumstances to attain sustainable and long-lasting change. To achieve environmental sustainability and enhance urban resilience decision-makers need to recognize that sustainable policies implemented at the local level can have lasting impacts on a global scale. Cities are increasingly becoming dominant in the sustainable development discourse since urban processes affect several fields like climate change, poverty eradication, food security, social inclusiveness, and economic growth. As a result, this primary role of cities led to the approval of Goal 11 by the 69<sup>th</sup> General Assembly to foster a commitment to “make cities and human settlement inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable” (UN, 2015). Such a goal was the result of the strong mobilization of several international networks of university-affiliated groups, local actors, and governments such as the Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). Urban SDG, through the exemplification of Goal 11, was the result of an alliance of different interconnected interests and organizations that led to a pro-urban discourse highlighting the crucial role that cities have in sustainable development. Cities cannot be just identified as related to the territory and the spatial concept, but they should be considered as the

connections with the relationships and practices that citizens, people, governments, and other actors establish among each other.

Achieving sustainable development requires the active participation of the public, private sector, and all relevant stakeholders, as well as effective coordination between local, regional, national, and international levels of governance. Localization needs coordination among multiple levels of government and stakeholders, as well as financial support and capacity building for local and regional governments to effectively engage in the process (Cities & Governments, 2020). The constraints on expanded and global supply chains are leading to the emergence of local economic development. Local and regional governments are exploring proximity models to ensure the availability of food and essential products through local production. Localization requires coordination among various levels of government and stakeholders, along with financial support and capacity building for local and regional governments to actively participate in the process. Local and regional governments are considering proximity models to ensure the local production of food and essential products (Cities & Governments, 2020). To foster SDG localization, it has been widely recognized the importance of bottom-up initiatives to address the current crisis and its subsequent impacts, while speeding up the achievement of the 2030 Agenda (Bilsky et al., 2021; Hidalgo Simons, 2021; Reuter, 2023) since local stakeholders have the knowledge and strategic resources to initiate a transformative change.

### **2.3. Cities, Urban Areas, and Neighborhoods: growth and decline**

In recent decades, urban centers have experienced a decline in population density due to residents relocating to suburbs and exurbs. Some other cities have maintained vibrant urban centers despite the expansion of their surrounding areas. Approximately 80% of the population in the United States resides in urban areas, specifically cities with a population exceeding 2,500 individuals (Henderson, 2002). According to most economists specializing in urban studies, individuals tend to concentrate close to one another due to the potential for enhanced productivity through cooperation (Henderson, 2002). Densely populated areas generally exhibit higher levels of productivity compared to sparsely populated ones. Recently, there has been a noticeable trend of population dispersal in the past few decades. Densely populated areas generally exhibit higher levels of productivity compared to sparsely populated ones. Recently, there has been a noticeable trend of population dispersal in the past few decades. Initially, suburbs emerged near major urban centers, followed by the development of outer-ring suburbs, and presently, the establishment of exurbs. Certain cities experienced population retention in their central areas as their boundaries expanded, whereas

others witnessed a decline in population density within their core (Omong, 2021). Cities tend to expand when they are perceived as more appealing compared to other cities, and contract when they are perceived as less appealing. Cities are considered appealing when they provide competitive salaries, affordable living expenses, and various amenities such as convenient access to recreational areas like lakes, oceans, and parks, favorable climatic conditions, and low crime rates. Cities experience varying rates of growth due to shifts in their relative attractiveness. When a city experiences an increase in attractiveness, such as due to a thriving industry and rising wages, it tends to attract a greater influx of individuals seeking to relocate. Cities can gain economic advantages through various mechanisms (Fee & Hartley, 2011; Duranton & Puga, 2014).

However, the rapid pace and extensive magnitude of urbanization present significant challenges (Avis, 2016). Urban areas are progressively characterized by social exclusion, impoverishment, conflict, and ecological deterioration (Beall et al., 2010). The unanticipated expansion of urban areas has the potential to have adverse effects on both the economic and social aspects of well-being (Avis, 2016). This can manifest in problems such as increased congestion, inadequate housing, strain on limited public services, as well as air pollution, and resource constraints (Satterthwaite, 2015). Furthermore, the resulting health concerns associated with these challenges have also been highlighted in the work of Mitlin and Satterthwaite (2012).

The advanced industrial nations across the globe have undergone a process of economic restructuring, which is commonly believed to be closely linked to the phenomenon of globalization. The advancement of technology has resulted in an increasing level of interconnectedness and internationalization among businesses and economic activities. This is evident in the significant growth of global flows involving people, capital, and goods (Kazepov, 2005). One of the notable features of these changes is the increasing demand for services, leading to a rise in service-related jobs. These jobs necessitate a highly skilled workforce. Nevertheless, the process of global economic restructuring often leads to consequences of unemployment and an increased demand for low-skilled or unskilled employment opportunities (Avis, 2016). According to scholars such as Sassen (1991), the outcome of the restructuring process is believed to lead to heightened social polarization. This refers to a simultaneous increase in both the lower and upper ends of the socio-economic distribution. For instance, there is an observed rise in the percentage of households with low skills or low income. At the same time, there is also an increase in the proportion of highly skilled individuals or households with high incomes. The presence of heightened social inequality and social division leads to the inclusion of certain segments of society

while simultaneously excluding others (Musterd & Ostendorf, 2013). Those who are excluded experience a loss of opportunities, resources, and ultimately the capacity to participate in society. This is evident through their limited involvement in the labor market, low participation in education, disadvantaged position in the housing market, restricted political engagement, and limited socio-cultural integration. The divisions are also believed to be manifested in spatial patterns. The segregation of affluent individuals and less affluent households into distinct residential areas will lead to socio-economic segregation (Musterd & Ostendorf, 2013). Unequal distribution of benefits resulting from agglomeration is observed among urban populations as well. Urban residents typically have better access to services, but those living in poverty may experience lower-quality services and struggle with high costs. Social groups, particularly those living in informal settlements, may face marginalization in terms of their access to services and involvement in decision-making processes (Avis, 2016: 5). Indeed, despite the availability of new investment and employment opportunities in urban areas, there has been a significant increase in the population of low-income urban residents. The majority of the advantages resulting from economic growth are enjoyed by groups that are not classified as poor. Urban poverty has significantly increased since the mid-1970s, with a larger number of people experiencing inadequate incomes in urban areas (Satterthwaite, 2015; Omong, 2021).

### **2.3.1. Urban Poverty and Social Exclusion in Urban Areas**

Multiple factors contribute to urban poverty. The international measurement of poverty has been insufficient, resulting in challenges in accurately quantifying the extent of the problem. Poverty lines often rely primarily on food expenses, occasionally incorporating minor adjustments to account for non-food necessities. The initial poverty line of one dollar per day, which is now commonly set at \$1.25 per day (and may be further increased according to current discussions), was primarily determined based on the cost of food. However, this measurement does not take into account the various dimensions of urban poverty, i.e., hazardous and insecure housing, inadequate and often unstable income, high crime rate, voicelessness and powerlessness within political systems and bureaucratic structures, inadequate or lacking infrastructure and services, etc. (Mitlin and Satterthwaite, 2013; Satterthwaite, 2015). Cities in the Western world, to various extents, embody the socio-spatial consequences of polarization, segregation, and exclusion processes. The outcomes are contingent upon the nature and magnitude of the social processes. These social processes, in turn, are dependent on a broader array of factors and developments. The economic framework of a city and the ongoing process of restructuring are often regarded as influential

factors in both social exclusion, fragmentation and integration within urban areas (Musterd & Ostendorf, 2013).

Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the concept of social exclusion is of utmost importance. According to Good Gingrich and Lightman (2015), the concept of social exclusion is characterized by several key attributes. Firstly, it is multidimensional, meaning that it encompasses various aspects and dimensions. Secondly, it is dynamic, implying that it is subject to change and evolution over time. Additionally, it is contextual, occurring within a specific time and place. Furthermore, it is relative or comparative, suggesting that it is understood in relation to other factors or entities. Moreover, it is rooted in structural sources rather than being solely influenced by individual factors. It is also relational, as it is intertwined with social processes. Lastly, its effects are interconnected and compounding, meaning that they have complex and interdependent consequences.

By analyzing social exclusion, it is possible to identify various socio-spatial formations can be identified, distinguished by structural and ecological variations resulting from diverse institutional logics of segregation and aggregation. These formations often lead to significant levels of blight, poverty, and hardship. Exclusion can be based on color and class, leading to a racially and culturally homogeneous environment in the former case, while the latter is characterized by fundamental heterogeneity in terms of both class and ethno-national recruitment (Wacquant, 1996).

Poverty and exclusion are rooted in the stigmatization associated with living in confined areas, referred to as "neighborhoods of exile" by Dupet and Lapeyronnie (1992: 114). These neighborhoods serve as places where marginalized populations are forced to reside. These areas are often stigmatized due to their perceived association with high levels of crime, immigration, and unsafety, resulting in a negative public image. Media often contribute to the amplification of negative perceptions of these neighborhoods, thereby reinforcing their unfavorable public image. To outsiders, urban neighborhoods may seem like a single, uniform entity. However, residents perceive them as a diverse collection of distinct micro-locations. Residing in these neighborhoods has a significant impact on various aspects of residents' lives, including employment opportunities, romantic relationships, interactions with law enforcement and welfare services, and social interactions with acquaintances. Residential discrimination negatively impacts job search and perpetuates local unemployment by creating additional distrust and reluctance among employers towards residents based on their place of residence. Territorial stigmatization impacts interactions with employers, policy makers, courts, and street-level welfare bureaucrats (Wacquant, 1996).

Living in a ghetto neighborhood poses physical risks and high levels of psychological stress due to the high incidence of violent crime. This can have a detrimental effect on individuals, both physically and mentally (Wacquant, 1996). A crucial aspect of isolated enclaves of persistent poverty is the presence and integration of institutions that cater to the fundamental needs of their residents and facilitate their inclusion within the broader society. Public intervention often lacks structure or is insufficient, resulting in further exclusionary mechanisms (Wacquant, 1996).

The urban space, including the state and city, location, composition, and proximity to important locations, plays a significant role in determining the potential for social exclusion and framing the opportunities available to citizens (Musterd & Murie, 2006).

Poverty concentrations are consistently associated with areas lacking opportunities. European cities possess distinct physical, economic, cultural, and social attributes that have developed over time. There are also several areas characterized by a high concentration of impoverished or marginalized individuals. European researchers have also discussed the concepts of segregation, spatial inequality, and excluded spaces (Madanipour et al., 1998; Marcuse and Van Kempen, 2000; Musterd and Ostendorf, 1998; Musterd, Murie & Kesteloot, 2014). However, it is important to note that not all urban areas under discussion, and possibly not even the majority, are isolated or heavily abandoned. In fact, only a few urban areas can be considered completely devoid of activities, while many still maintain their commercial and public infrastructures. Certain areas possess distinct spatial attributes that offer individuals a fresh opportunity structure when attempting to integrate into urban society. Meert (2002) examined various neighborhoods in Brussels and highlighted the presence of social networks and territories at the local level, which can potentially foster social integration within society (Musterd & Murie, 2006). While space does play a significant role, not all spaces with concentrated socially excluded populations have the same outcomes. The spatial dimension may exacerbate the problem at hand. However, its influence may be less significant in different contexts. In fact, in some cases, the spatial dimension may even contribute to problem-solving (Musterd & Murie, 2006). The literature usually indicates that individuals living in poor neighborhoods experience higher levels of isolation due to factors such as higher rates of unemployment and welfare recipients, limited opportunities for community involvement, and a greater tendency to limit social interactions. However, critics argue that the evidence supporting the connection between neighborhood poverty and social isolation relies heavily on inferences made from census data on the socioeconomic background of neighborhoods, rather than on actual social networks,

activities, and community involvement among urban residents living in poverty (Newman, 1992; Newman & McLean, 1998; Rankin & Quane, 2000).

### **2.3.2. Social Exclusion at neighborhood level**

The investigation of the effect of cities and communities on social exclusion has garnered attention in recent decades, prompting analysis across several academic disciplines. Specifically, scholars have explored the impact of neighborhood effects on individuals' access to opportunities and services. The issues associated with reducing social exclusion necessitate a comprehensive understanding of the concept's definition, the interconnected dimensions it encompasses, and the different strategies and tools that can be employed to address this complex problem. The concept of social exclusion encompasses not only the traditional emphasis on concerns related to distribution, but also includes considerations of social engagement, social and political integration, and the absence of power within urban contexts. This idea is accompanied by misunderstandings arising from the inherent polarity (Levitas, 1998) associated with marginalization, fragmentation, and segregation. All of these aspects pertain to the lack of opportunities available to individuals to fully engage in society and attain full status as citizens (Walker & Walker, 1997). This includes participation in various domains such as education, employment, use of public infrastructure and services, as well as access to safety nets. Additionally, it encompasses the extent and robustness of social connections with friends and family members.

There exists an expanding body of literature that examines many facets pertaining to cities, neighborhoods, and social exclusion. This research underscores the disparities between urban transformations and the dynamics observed in inner-city neighborhoods as compared to peripheral places. According to Murie and Musterd (2004), capturing the intrinsic complexity of social exclusion and adopting a holistic perspective is a challenging task. There exists a notable disparity between empirical narratives of marginalized neighborhoods and communities inside specific countries and cities, and theoretical narratives that rely on the juxtaposition of urban and other indices. The authors have emphasized that a significant limitation in resolving this issue is the persistent inability to consider the contextual factors, the interplay between various processes, and the availability of local resources.

The implementation of initiatives that tackle social exclusion at the neighborhood level is of utmost importance. However, it is essential that these efforts are integrated with broader levels of governance, such as municipal, regional, and national levels. This integration is necessary in order to effectively address the underlying causes of social exclusion in a comprehensive and multi-faceted manner, taking into account various dimensions and scales



of the issue. The differentiation between contexts at different levels, such as neighborhoods, cities, and states, as well as between cities and countries, leads to significant variations. This does not mean that states, cities, and neighborhoods cannot learn from other situations (Musterd, Murie & Kesteloot, 2014). However, they should exercise caution when adopting best practices from other regions, as each urban configuration possesses distinct shared strategic resources that are unique. These resources may include socio-historical assets, cultural elements, and values, among others (Murie & Musterd, 2004).

Different neighborhoods may encounter varying forms of social exclusion due to distinct reasons. Moreover, specific types of neighborhoods may present more favorable prospects for integration compared to others. In certain urban areas, inner-city neighborhoods are either adjacent to or well-connected with the city center (Murie & Musterd, 2004). Conversely, peripheric city neighborhoods often face challenges in terms of limited access to public transportation links and inadequate infrastructure, which can hinder the availability of favorable employment opportunities. The consideration of location and housing market tenure is essential when examining the dynamics of social exclusion. The presence or absence of a culturally homogeneous population, poverty concentration, and attitudes and behaviors within and towards neighborhoods are among the additional factors associated with neighborhoods (Murie & Musterd, 2004). Various factors can contribute to or impede social exclusion, and one such factor pertains to the transformations occurring within neighborhoods. These changes can be significant, resulting from activities such as demolition, requalification, and gentrification. These processes have the potential to induce a swift transformation in the spatial arrangement and functional dynamics of the affected neighborhoods. The researchers also identified other significant factors in their study, namely social homogeneity. They found that peripheral areas with a higher degree of social homogeneity tend to exhibit increased levels of interaction and mutual support among their residents. Finally, the significant importance of spatial geography was emphasized. Insufficient quality of connections in a peripheral location can have a detrimental impact on the opportunities for individuals to integrate into urban society (Murie & Musterd, 2004).

#### **2.4. Framing social exclusion through the lenses of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda**

Throughout the history of humanity, social exclusion has remained a pervasive issue within societies. The issue being discussed has been a long-standing characteristic of societies in general, but it has never been addressed on a global scale from a political standpoint until the establishment of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In

September 2015, a significant milestone was reached when several heads of state and government explicitly acknowledged the pressing issue of reducing inequality and social exclusion within and among countries. This recognition led to the integration of this issue into their policy management, marking a significant step forward in addressing these challenges. According to Kaltenborn, Krajewski, and Kuhn (2019), This event marked a significant achievement in the realm of global development, particularly in light of the detrimental consequences associated with social exclusion (Goukens, 2021).

Social exclusion has profound impacts on both the individual and the global scale. The rise in social exclusion and inequality has various negative consequences. These consequences include higher levels of violence both from and towards marginalized groups, heightened divisiveness within societies, reduced productivity, a rise in poverty and famine, overall deterioration of human health and well-being, and lower quality education (Goukens, 2021; Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, & Stucke, 2001). The complex nature of this global issue poses challenges in terms of measurement and intervention due to its multidimensionality. While the United Nations has made significant strides toward achieving its objective of creating a more equitable and inclusive global society, it is important to note that they have not adequately prioritized the issue of exclusion faced by specific groups. Numerous organizations and researchers who have explored the concept of social exclusion have encountered challenges in accurately identifying and concurrently measuring its various dimensions. The UN's SDG framework incorporates a series of indicators for social exclusion. However, there is limited understanding regarding the extent to which these indicators are both useful and comprehensive in measuring social exclusion at the national level (Goukens, 2021).

Within the SDG framework, social exclusion is observed to occur across three distinct yet interconnected levels within society. The macro-level represents the initial level of analysis and is closely linked to power disparities, resource competition, societal stereotypes, misconceptions, and racial discrimination. At the meso level, there is a lack of recognition and appropriate response to the needs of these groups. This phenomenon can be attributed to social exclusion at the macro level. Both Macro- and Meso-level barriers are interconnected and strengthened by micro-level factors. At the micro-level, several issues contribute to increased fear and mistrust of service providers, such as poverty, limited or absent trust in the system, disempowerment, lower literacy levels, social capital, and cultural capital among excluded groups (Goukens, 2021). The goals and related targets addressing, directly and indirectly, social exclusion are portrayed in Table 2 below.

Table 2. SDGs and Targets related to the social exclusion problem (UN, 2015)

Goal	Target
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goal 1</b></p> <p><i>End Poverty in all its forms everywhere</i></p>	<p><i>1.1. “By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day” (UN, 2015: 15).</i></p>
	<p><i>1.3. “Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable” (UN, 2015: 15).</i></p>
	<p><i>1.4. “By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology, and financial services, including microfinance” (UN, 2015: 15).</i></p>
	<p><i>1.5. “By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social, and environmental shocks and disasters” (UN, 2015: 15).</i></p>
	<p><i>1.5.b “Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional, and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions” (UN, 2015: 15).</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goal 2</b></p> <p><i>End Hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture</i></p>	<p><i>2.1. “By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round” (UN, 2015: 15).</i></p>

<p><b>Goal 3</b> <i>Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</i></p>	<p>3.5. “Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol” (UN, 2015: 16).</p>
	<p>3.8. “Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all” (UN, 2015: 16).</p>
<p><b>Goal 4</b> <i>Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</i></p>	<p>4.1. “By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes” (UN, 2015: 17).</p>
	<p>4.2. “By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education” (UN, 2015: 17).</p>
	<p>4.3. “By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university” (UN, 2015: 17).</p>
	<p>4.4. “By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship” (UN, 2015: 17).</p>
	<p>4.5. “By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations” (UN, 2015: 17).</p>
	<p>4.7.a. “Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all” (UN, 2015: 17).</p>
<p><b>Goal 5</b></p>	<p>5.1. “End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere” (UN, 2015: 18).</p>

<i>Achieve Gender Equality and empower all women and girls</i>	5.2. “Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation” (UN, 2015: 18).
	5.3. “Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate” (UN, 2015: 18).
	5.5. “Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life” (UN, 2015: 18).
	5.6. “Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences” (UN, 2015: 18).
	5. a. “Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources, in accordance with national laws” (UN, 2015: 18).
	5. b. “Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women” (UN, 2015: 18).
	5. c. “Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels” (UN, 2015: 18).
<b>Goal 6</b> <i>Ensure Availability and Sustainable management of</i>	6.1. “By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all” (UN, 2015: 18).
	6.2. “By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying

<i>water and sanitation for all</i>	special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations” (UN, 2015: 18).
<b>Goal 7</b> <i>Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all</i>	7.1. “By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy service” (UN, 2015: 19).
<b>Goal 8</b> <i>Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</i>	<p>8.3. “Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services” (UN, 2015: 19).</p> <p>8.5. “By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value” (UN, 2015: 19).</p> <p>8.6. “By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training” (UN, 2015: 19).</p> <p>8.9. “By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products” (UN, 2015: 20).</p>
<b>Goal 9</b> <i>Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation</i>	<p>9.1. “Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all” (UN, 2015: 20).</p> <p>9.2. “Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry’s share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries” (UN, 2015: 20).</p> <p>9. c. “Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020” (UN, 2015: 21).</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goal 10</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Reduce inequality within and among countries</i></p>	<p>10.1. “By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average” (UN, 2015: 21).</p>
	<p>10.2. “By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status. in, religion or economic or other status” (UN, 2015: 21).</p>
	<p>10.3. “Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies, and action in this regard” (UN, 2015: 21).</p>
	<p>10.4. “Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage, and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality” (UN, 2015: 21).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Goal 11</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable</i></p>	<p>11.1. “By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe, and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums” (UN, 2015: 21).</p>
	<p>11.2. “By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons” (UN, 2015: 21).</p>
	<p>11.3. “By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries” (UN, 2015: 21).</p>
	<p>11.5. “By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations” (UN, 2015: 22).</p>
	<p>11.7. “By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and</p>

	<p>children, older persons and persons with disabilities” (UN, 2015: 22).</p> <p><i>11. a.</i> “Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning” (UN, 2015: 22).</p> <p><i>11. b.</i> “By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels” (UN, 2015: 22).</p>
<p><b>Goal 12</b> <i>Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</i></p>	<p><i>12. 5.</i> “By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling, and reuse” (UN, 2015: 22).</p> <p><i>12.8.</i> “By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature” (UN, 2015: 23).</p> <p><i>12. b.</i> “Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products”. (UN, 2015: 23).</p>
<p><b>Goal 13</b> <i>Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</i></p>	<p><i>13.1.</i> “Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries”. (UN, 2015: 23).</p> <p><i>13.3.</i> “Improve education, awareness-raising, and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning” (UN, 2015: 23).</p> <p><i>13. b.</i> “Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities” (UN, 2015: 23).</p>
<p><b>Goal 16</b></p>	<p><i>16.1.</i> “Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere” (UN, 2015: 25).</p>



<p><i>Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels</i></p>	<p>16.2. “End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children” (UN, 2015: 25).</p>
	<p>16.3. “Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all” (UN, 2015: 25).</p>
	<p>16.4. “By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets, and combat all forms of organized crime” (UN, 2015: 25).</p>
	<p>16.7. “Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels” (UN, 2015: 25).</p>
	<p>16.9. “By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration” (UN, 2015: 25).</p>
	<p>16.10. “Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements” (UN, 2015: 26).</p>
	<p>16. b. “Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development” (UN, 2015: 26).</p>
<p><b>Goal 17</b> <i>Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development</i></p>	<p>17.16. “Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology, and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries” (UN, 2015: 27).</p>
	<p>17.17. “Encourage and promote effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships” (UN, 2015: 27).</p>

The table presented above illustrates that the issue of social exclusion is being addressed by various goals and targets outlined in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda. Both social exclusion and the SDGs share a common emphasis on poverty, inequalities, and individuals who face disadvantages due to personal attributes, circumstances, or geographical location.

The UN's 2030 Agenda emphasizes the importance of identifying those who are most disadvantaged and least capable of benefiting from sustainable social and economic development, with the goal of ensuring that no one is left behind (UN, 2015). It is clearly stated that:

“...By adopting the 2030 Agenda, Member States have committed to leave no one behind in their implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)... Within countries, all people, regardless of their backgrounds, have rights and responsibilities to fulfill their potential in life and lead decent, dignified, and rewarding lives in a healthy environment. This means that goals and targets need to be met for all segments of society. Those often left behind are people living in poverty and other vulnerable situations, including children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees internally displaced persons, and migrants. Their voices must be heard, and their active participation as agents of change needs to be promoted...To achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, we need holistic and coherent cross-sectoral policies supported by disaggregated data and evidence-based policymaking. We need to identify those who are left behind and the circumstances that prevent their full participation in the benefits of development.” (UNECE, 2022: 9).

Figure 1 below portrays the goals and the related targets connected to the “leave no one behind” principle according to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Task Force on the Measurement of Social Exclusion.



Figure 1 Goals and Targets related to the "Leave No One Behind" Principle (UNECE, 2022: 11). Source Created by UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, <https://www.undp.org/eurasia>

The concept of social exclusion can be interpreted differently by various individuals. This phenomenon can be attributed, at least partially, to its cultural specificity and normative

nature, necessitating a definition that takes into account the local and historical context. Moreover, the term 'social exclusion' is employed to describe both the process through which individuals are marginalized and the specific outcomes that are considered indicative of being 'excluded' (UNECE, 2022). The term is commonly and interchangeably used to refer to the realm beyond poverty, the absence of social or economic inclusion, disparities in social and economic conditions, a lack of social unity, and the opposite of overall well-being and prosperity. Social exclusion is a concept that is assessed in various contexts, serving the purpose of comprehending the phenomenon itself, as well as exploring its antithesis or related factors (UNECE, 2022). In general, when assessing social exclusion or inclusion, researchers tend to concentrate on specific domains or aspects of life that are associated with specific theories of social exclusion or policy objectives. Specific indicators are utilized to measure various aspects within each domain. In various countries and within the broader academic literature, there exists a range of domains that are employed to assess social exclusion. These domains are utilized in various measurement frameworks, which serve as examples of how social exclusion is evaluated. Numerous frameworks incorporate poverty and material living conditions as essential aspects (UNECE, 2022). However, the measurement of social exclusion or inclusion can encompass various other dimensions of life. These dimensions include labor market participation, educational opportunities, and achievements, skills development, health and disability, access to healthcare and public services, essential infrastructure such as transportation, and engagement in social, political, and civic activities (UNECE, 2022). The measurement of social exclusion's social dimensions is often characterized by uncertainty. Additionally, the inclusion of indicators pertaining to social support, political participation, and civic engagement in measures of social exclusion is not commonly observed. One suggestion is to improve the assessment of the social dimensions of social exclusion by integrating indicators of social support, as well as social, political, and civic engagement, into the current measurement practices. The evaluation of social exclusion should encompass multiple dimensions of an individual's life. There exists a notable degree of variation in the variety of indicators used to measure social exclusion, as well as the accessibility of these indicators from a singular source. The consolidation of indicators into multidimensional measures based on counting is of great significance, as emphasized by the UNECE (2022).

## **2.5. Building a community through active citizenship.**

According to Wichowsky and Moynihan (2008), citizens' distrust of the government and public institutions has increased over the past few decades due to the perceived lack of opportunities for citizen engagement with public sector organizations and the limited consideration given to unintended consequences of certain policies on citizens' outcomes. This has resulted in a significant erosion of public trust and admiration. According to Peel (1998: 388), the skepticism exhibited by marginalized individuals towards the government might be considered a logical reaction to their encounters with untrustworthy governance (Grippi, 2020) <sup>1</sup>.

### **2.5.1. The relationship between performance management and citizens' trust.**

In greater depth, the existing methodology for evaluating performance lacks consideration for the realm of citizenship. Specifically, commonly used key performance indicators fail to incorporate socially constructed measures such as transparency or social equity. This omission can be attributed to a technocratic and static approach that prioritizes expertise and perceived neutrality and rationality. Various types of policies have significant impacts on citizenship outcomes, such as political involvement, social capital, and the sense of social inclusion (Wichowsky & Moynihan, 2008).

According to Campbell (2003), public policy feedback theory posits that policies contribute to the formation of citizens by emphasizing collective ideas and behaviors rather than individual attributes and preferences (Wichowsky & Moynihan, 2008). Additionally, it highlights the role of civic attitudes in fostering political engagement. There exist distinct methodologies for evaluating the civic implications of policy formulation and implementation. Additionally, how programs distribute and allocate benefits among individuals can significantly shape citizens' self-perception, as well as their understanding of their rights and obligations within a political society (Wichowsky & Moynihan, 2008). Public policies play a crucial role in facilitating citizen education on rights and obligations, as well as fostering incentives to uphold and advance a liberal political culture. This, in turn, contributes to the promotion and consolidation of democracy within a given state (Campbell, 2003). More in detail, the implementation of institutionalized involvement has the potential to create numerous avenues for political mobilization and collective activities (Grippi, 2020).

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<sup>1</sup> Unpublished Master Thesis: Grippi, N., (2020). Enhancing tourism destination attractiveness through Dynamic Performance Governance framework in a historic city neighborhood: The Ballarò case study. Università degli Studi di Palermo.

According to Wichowsky and Moynihan (2008: 915), the citizen-government relationship can be understood through the lens of the "policies build citizens" approach within the feedback theory perspective. Specifically, citizens tend to focus their attention on the public services they receive and form generalizations based on their personal experiences. In this context, individuals primarily examine public services that directly impact their own lives. The examination of the outcomes produced by a policy implementation or the provision of a public service is a vital aspect of the discourse (Grippi, 2020).

According to Hatry (1999), it is possible to distinguish between intermediate outcomes and end outcomes. Intermediate outcomes refer to metrics that indicate progress toward achieving a certain goal, whereas end outcomes are more easily measurable and under the control of service providers. The intermediate goals of citizens, in this context, encompass the various procedures involved in service delivery that aim to ensure respectful treatment, equity, and due process. On the other hand, the ultimate outcomes of citizenship include civic engagement, participation, trust, and political effectiveness.

Local governments are utilizing a combination of performance management and citizen participation as strategies to enhance government accountability and responsiveness. This approach aims to foster an overall increase in citizens' trust in government (Grippi, 2020).

Furthermore, the establishment of stronger connections between public administrators and their stakeholders, particularly citizens but not exclusively, can enhance trust within the population when viewed through the lens of collaborative networks (Wichowsky & Moynihan, 2008). Relationships that are built on responsiveness, communication, and trust have the potential to enhance citizens' engagement in urban life and decision-making processes. Additionally, research has demonstrated that when public administrators trust citizens, it leads to an increased willingness to collaborate with them, fostering a reciprocal development of confidence and trust (Cooper, Bryer, & Meek, 2008; Grippi, 2020).

### **2.5.2 Trust as Driving Factors for Active Citizenship and Civic Mindedness**

The level of trust or distrust that exists between administrators and citizens is influenced by the prevailing social and political cultures. Trust can be conceptualized as a psychological disposition rooted in the belief that one's vulnerability can be embraced due to the assurance that another individual will honor the anticipated conduct (Yang, 2005: 275). Mutual trust plays a crucial role in democratic governance as it serves as a foundation for the establishment and sustainability of networks. Additionally, it is considered one of the essential prerequisites for societal education and collective actions. Trust has emerged as a significant concept in comprehending social development and relationships, encompassing

various social, cultural, and structural factors. Trust, as stated by Peel (1998), can be regarded as the primary catalyst for substantial and enduring transformation (Grippi, 2020). One of the primary challenges associated with the notion of trust is the inherent difficulty in quantifying its perception. Specifically, within the realm of governance, this phenomenon exhibits diverse perceptions and varies from individual to individual (Cooper et al., 2008). Cooper, Bryer, and Meek (2008) argue that when bureaucrats are responsive to neighborhoods and neighborhood councils, it leads to an increase in citizens' levels of trust. Two distinct forms of trust can be identified based on individual behavioral patterns: calculus-based trust and identification-based trust. The first form is rooted in the perception of risks associated with deviating from expected behavior, which could result in a breach of trust and the loss of potential rewards. In contrast, the second form of trust transcends mere calculations and is characterized by a deeper level of understanding, personal familiarity, and mutual connection. Over time, these interactions can be categorized as either continuous or sustained. In the former scenario, they are perceived as a consistent pattern of ongoing communication and interactions that are guided by established agreements between partners. In the latter scenario, interactions are not constrained by time and are not contingent upon the actions of the individuals involved. Even if agreements are formalized, they are characterized by a tendency towards innovation and creativity, resulting in a pattern of community interaction and, more broadly, fostering trust in the relationships (Grippi, 2020). The economic perspective in trust research posits that trust and trustworthiness are guided by principles of economics and rational calculation. They are rooted in self-interest and personal welfare and involve cognitive and behavioral processes that lead to decision-making (Yang, 2005). Furthermore, following economic theory, trust plays a crucial role in reducing transaction costs, thereby rendering cooperation more cost-effective.

Another perspective, known as the ethical approach, is grounded in the notion that trust is a mindset shaped by social and moral connections, guided by the principle of appropriateness to optimize utility (Yang, 2005).

Cooper, Bryer, and Meek (2006) argue that citizen efficacy, trust in government, and citizen competence can be cultivated by engaging in deliberative processes that prioritize citizen-centered collaborative public management. Moreover, the implementation of deliberative processes represents the most effective approach to enhance public trust in the government. Simultaneously, it serves as a means to enhance the government's responsiveness and legitimacy. Administrators place their trust in citizens, believing that individuals who are directly impacted by their performance will act in a manner that is advantageous when they are actively engaged in the administrative process. According to Yang (2005), this concept

is founded on the notion of citizens possessing competence, skills, judgment, and integrity. However, administrators should be cautious about placing too much trust in citizens, as there are potential risks associated with this approach. One such risk is the opportunity costs involved, including the expenditure of time, money, and other resources that may be required to involve citizens in decision-making processes. Additionally, there is a possibility that citizens may identify issues or errors in administrators' decision-making and service delivery, which could create difficulties or challenges. The level of trust that citizens have in their government can have a significant impact on their level of civic engagement. This is because citizens who trust their government are more likely to actively participate in the policymaking and implementation processes (Grippi, 2020).

In this regard, it can be argued that civic participation plays a crucial role in democracy. This is because the active engagement of citizens in democratic processes not only sustains the vitality of the community but also holds public sector organizations responsible for their actions. Additionally, through civic engagement, individuals acquire democratic skills and cultivate a more comprehensive understanding of their civic duties, thereby fostering a heightened sense of community (Wang, et al., 2015).

### **2.5.3. Defining Active Citizenship**

The concept of active citizenship has been observed in various contexts and takes on different forms. The existing body of literature on citizen participation explores the diverse dynamics between government officials and citizens, which play a crucial role in shaping and executing public policies. However, it is unfortunate that civic engagement is often perceived as a burden by both citizens and administrators, rather than being recognized as a valuable asset that benefits society as a whole.

Who qualifies as a citizen? According to Aristotle (IV century b.C.), an individual may be deemed a citizen if they possess the privilege to participate in governance or adjudicate matters within the city. To further investigate the subject matter of this research, it is imperative to establish a clear definition of this particular concept. In broad terms, the term "citizen" is employed to encompass a diverse group of individuals who possess varying preferences and backgrounds (Yang, 2005). From an objective standpoint, citizenship is contingent upon various factors such as place of birth, contextual considerations, and historical epochs. However, from a consensual standpoint, it is primarily predicated upon the voluntary choices and actions of individuals. In addition, citizenship can be understood as the legal and social status that delineates the rights, responsibilities, and duties of individuals within a particular community. The status and role mentioned can be officially

defined in terms of qualifications, rights, and obligations through the establishment of constitutions, charters, and laws. Alternatively, they can also be informally determined based on values, tradition, and consensus. According to Cooper and Gulick (1984), a citizen is an individual who meets the requirements for citizenship as defined either formally or informally by a specific community. Additionally, citizens are expected to fulfill the responsibilities associated with this role as determined by the community (Grippi, 2020).

It is important to emphasize that the concept of citizenship has changed over the centuries due to varying contextual factors and environments. In the modern era, the concept of citizenship has been closely associated with the nation-state. According to this perspective, citizenship was contingent upon an individual's affiliation with a particular country. However, this requirement has become less significant in contemporary times due to societal transformations and the growing interconnectedness among citizens, public sector organizations, and governments (Cooper & Yoder, 1999). The challenges arising from global developments in the organization of modern societies have brought to light the interdependencies that exist across various levels and domains, including finance, environment, technology, politics, and culture. This phenomenon has been defined by a growing interdependence and interconnectedness, heightened global-level interaction and organization, and the emergence of transnational political structures. These factors present challenges and complexities to the sovereignty and jurisdiction of nation-states (Cooper & Yoder, 1999; Soysal, 1998).

Flathman and Lowi, as cited by Cooper and Gulick (1984), offer an additional significant definition that underscores the interrelation between citizenship and authority. The primary focus of the research conducted by Flathman focuses on differentiating between high and low perspectives on citizenship. In the initial scenario, individuals are considered to be equal and possess the ability to collectively exert authority. On the other hand, the second scenario entails a hierarchical allocation of authority that is restricted to a privileged subset of individuals. In broad terms, the participation of citizens through conventional institutional channels has a restricted impact on government politics. Consequently, there has been an increasing interest among citizens, civil servants, and other actors in actively involving the public in decision-making processes (King et al., 1998). Lowi emphasizes the significant impact of the role, as determined by legal structures, as well as the numerous informal effects including values, culture, traditions, and norms, among others. In this context, according to the author, two distinct poles can be discerned: "legal citizenship" and "ethical citizenship" (Cooper & Gulick, 1984). The former is characterized by its definition and foundation in rights, obligations imposed by institutions, and statutory provisions. Consequently,



citizenship is regarded as a strictly political status and role. On the other hand, the notion of "ethical citizenship" pertains to the role and obligations of individuals within a given community. These responsibilities are shaped by the socio-economic aspects of life, encompassing the values, traditions, norms, and culture specific to that community. As a result, this definition encompasses a wider scope of the concept of citizenship (Wang, 2015; Cooper & Gulick, 1984). The primary distinction lies in the voluntary nature of the association, where citizens' obligations are rooted in values, norms, tradition, culture, and consensus among community members (Cooper & Gulick, 1984; Grippi, 2020).

Schumpeter (1943) offers an alternative perspective of citizenship, positing that its primary function lies in the selection of leaders who shape public policies (Roberts, 2004). According to various scholars, the notion of citizenship should encompass ethical and sociological considerations. Governments ought to be primarily guided by a moral imperative, which entails the realization of values in the lives of their its residents. However, it is crucial that not only the citizens comprehend this moral objective, but also that each individual collectively adopts it (Roberts, 2004). According to Roberts (2004), the moral purpose encompasses the ability of scholars to broaden the horizons of citizens, as well as voluntary organizations and communities. This process involves the development of values, norms, and traditions within the community, to improve society as a whole. By doing so, a sense of responsibility and civic commitment is fostered among citizens. Such a process fosters a holistic concept of citizenship which encompasses the duties and obligations but also includes and establishes a connection with the concepts of participation and active engagement (Grippi, 2020).

Thatcherism, also known as the active citizens, presents a contrasting definition of a citizen. According to this perspective, citizens are individuals who abide by the law and seek to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the market's rights. However, they also strive to exhibit compassion towards those who are less fortunate (Faulks, 2006). This concept entails making a comparison between active citizens and entrepreneurs, emphasizing that active citizens are generally not recognized as political actors who actively participate in the formulation of policies and contribute to political decision-making. The redefinition of citizenship during the era of neo-liberalism was predominantly shaped by the principles of market rights and the rational choice theory. The rights that were viewed as more advanced forms of citizenship encompassed property ownership, consumer rights, and the freedom to select among service providers, in contrast to collectivist welfare rights. The Thatcherism, as for the New Public Management, espoused the principles of privatizing public service provision and incorporating market forces into the public sector (Faulks, 2006).

It is imperative to establish a clear definition of citizen participation. While some definitions of citizenship include engagement as a fundamental aspect, the concept itself is subject to debate and complexity due to the multitude of variables involving individuals, groups, and organizations. Developing a comprehensive theory on citizen participation requires careful consideration of these factors (Roberts, 2004; Grippi, 2020).

## **2.6. From the Old Public Administration model to the New Public Governance theory.**

“Across the globe, we are witnessing the struggle of a large and diverse political system like China, the United States, and the European Union to align policy goals and implementation strategies with the values that are unique to the history, culture, and other relevant contextual factors of a specific geographic setting.” (Bao, Wang, Larsen & Morgan, 2012; 448).

Governments worldwide are experimenting with various models of political systems to establish a more effective convergence between central policy objectives and local societal values. These strategies encompass various approaches to public value-centered governance and leadership. Political systems worldwide exhibit a wide range of socially constructed values. Consequently, governments must tailor their policies and leadership approaches to align with prevailing values and address pertinent social issues. This alignment serves as a yardstick to gauge the effectiveness of their endeavors. Furthermore, this collection of fundamental principles, when combined with party and ideological values, transforms into policy platforms, policy initiatives, and public programs (Bao, Wang, Larsen & Morgan, 2012). The structure and processes of authority play a significant role in influencing government performance by facilitating the initiation and sustainability of collective action. Despite their inability to address all societal issues, governments collaborate, as well as with corporations, non-profit organizations, and civil society, to achieve desired outcomes.

Public organizations undergo continuous transformation in response to the imperative of evolution and adjustment to the socio-political and economic circumstances prevailing in the post-industrial era. This transformation is also associated with the varying causal interpretations of diverse criteria within a pluralistic society. There exist three distinct public administration models that can be identified:

- The Public Administration model, spanning from the late nineteenth century to the late 1970s/early 1980s;
- The New Public Management (NPM) model, which emerged in the 1980s and persisted until the early 21st century;

- The Public Governance model, gained prominence thereafter.

### **2.6.1. The Public Administration model.**

The initial and most ancient model entails the dominance of procedural and rule-based orientation, as well as the supremacy of bureaucratic structures, in guiding organizational management. Fundamental components of Public Administration encompass the primacy of legal principles, the pivotal involvement of the bureaucracy in policy implementation, the demarcation between political and administrative spheres, and the preeminence of professional individuals in the provision of public services (Osborne, 2010; Pollit et al., 2007).

The old public administration paradigm was based on a fundamental differentiation between the public and private sectors. During those years, the implementation of an extensive framework of laws, regulations, and protocols was intended as a mechanism to effectively manage the provision of services.

The concept of the "welfare state" can be regarded as an outcome of the traditional public administration paradigm (Taylor, 1911). The provision of social support has been a prominent feature in numerous developed nations since the early 1970s, as it was believed that this paradigm had the potential to effectively address the economic and social needs of people. However, the old public administration paradigm proved unsuccessful in fulfilling its ambitious mission (Vignieri, 2016; 2022).

Since the late 1970s, there has been a rise in a new model regarding the formulation and implementation of public policies and the public services provision, which focused on the perceived advantages of utilizing private-sector managerial techniques. The New Public Management (NPM) is based on values and norms that draw from private-sector management practice, as it emphasizes the vital role of entrepreneurial leadership within the public sector and the use of control mechanisms to monitor and to evaluate inputs and outputs. The implementation of management techniques inspired by business procedures was necessary to improve the accountability and responsibility of public services towards citizens. Such an approach, places emphasis on competition, customer satisfaction, and performance measurement to create public value for citizens (Bryson et al., 2014; Osborne, 2010; Grippi, 2020).

### **2.6.2. The New Public Management model.**

The New Public Management (NPM) can be identified as an integration of theories and research on Public Administration, incorporating certain principles drawn from private

sector management. Notably, this includes considerations such as the provision of high-quality public services to citizens-users, as well as the notions of efficiency and effectiveness (Iacovino, Barsanti & Cinquini, 2017). Hood (1991) posits that the NPM approach represents a fusion of the "new institutional economics movement" and business-oriented managerialism within the public sector (Zavattaro, 2012). These two movements have given rise to distinct sets of administrative reform doctrines. The first movement has produced doctrines that emphasize principles such as transparency, user choice, and contestability. On the other hand, the second movement has generated a set of doctrines that prioritize the concept of professional management expertise, discretionary power for management, and the central role of these factors in achieving improved organizational performance.

Both Old Public Administration and New Public Management emerged as partial theories due to their inability to fully comprehend the intricate nature of designing, delivering, and managing public services in today's society (Osborne, 2010).

According to Waheduzzman (2019), certain aspects of NPM, such as decentralization, market-oriented services, efficiency, and accountability, may require reform to develop a suitable environment for the implementation of the New Public Governance approach (Waheduzzaman, 2019). Decentralization primarily focuses on shifting decision-making authority from the central authority to lower levels within the public sector. This entails granting authority to autonomous administrative entities, both within and beyond the government, to develop tailored local strategies and promote local adaptability (Waheduzzman, 2019).

The traditional concept of NPM theory has been overlooked due to its substantive limitations in addressing complex policy issues, commonly referred to as "wicked problems." In this context, a new approach known as the governance approach has emerged. This approach emphasizes collaborative efforts and recognizes the need for assistance in achieving desired goals.

### **2.6.3. The New Public Governance model**

In the context of traditional public administration, the government held a position of significant authority, exerting control through policy development, laws and regulations, and the allocation of roles and responsibilities. In contrast, governance is distinguished by a dynamic and mutually beneficial collaboration and partnership among various stakeholders, on the procedural aspects of official governmental frameworks. Rhodes (1996: 654) posits that the term "governance" denotes a shift in the conceptualization of government,

encompassing a novel approach to the act of governing, an altered state of regulated norms, or a fresh modality through which society is governed (Grippi, 2020).

The notion of governance, as understood within a society-centric framework, entails the examination of networks comprising both public and private entities. These networks encompass a diverse range of mechanisms that facilitate vertical and horizontal linkages among different actors, such as politicians, civil servants, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations. This perspective adopts a multi-actor approach to understanding governance dynamics (Osborne, 2010). The concept of governance can be defined as the presence of self-organizing, inter-organizational networks that exhibit interdependence, resource exchange, established rules, and a considerable degree of autonomy from the state (Jules, 2017; Rhodes, 1997: 15). Rhodes further suggests that these networks are characterized by the absence of a central authority and instead have multiple centers of power due to their autonomous nature (p. 109). Other scholars offer alternative definitions of governance, which include the concepts of good governance and corporate governance. In the context of good governance, the emphasis is placed on the effective functioning of public administration, rather than its organizational structure and divisions. An alternative perspective on the concept of governance involves establishing a connection between market governance and NPM. In this conceptualization, the primary emphasis for the government lies in establishing objectives rather than engaging in the execution process, which is delegated to distinct government entities or other accountable organizations. However, it is important to note that there exists a significant distinction between these two approaches. The NPM approach, in particular, seeks to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the current bureaucratic system through the implementation of performance management strategies. This approach, however, maintains a certain level of detachment and distance. On the other hand, governance places greater emphasis on fostering horizontal relationships between governmental organizations and other external entities (Klijn, 2008). The concept of governance is placed alongside multilevel governance or inter-governmental relations and is characterized as a multi-layered form of government or inter-governmental governance. From this perspective, it is argued that networks play a crucial role in addressing the various challenges faced by public organizations, including issues related to their structure and hierarchical levels (Klijn, 2008; Grippi, 2020).

The concept of governance, particularly in certain areas of the governance literature, is closely associated with network governance, which is considered one of the most recent and significant definitions of governance. According to the theoretical framework proposed by Klijn (2008), governance occurs within networks comprising both public and non-public

actors and is characterized by intricate processes and negotiation interactions among these actors. Lyn, Heinrich, and Hill (2001: 7) offer a substantial contribution to the elucidation of the concept of governance. They define governance as a system encompassing laws, rules, judicial decisions, and administrative practices that serve to restrict, prescribe, and facilitate the provision of publicly supported goods and services. An alternative conceptualization of governance, which pertains to the process of decision-making, posits that it encompasses the regulations and protocols that govern the collective decision-making process. This perspective diverges from an individualistic standpoint, as it focuses on the decision-making dynamics of a group comprising individuals, organizations, or systems of organizations (Stoker, 1998; 2006). Broadly speaking, various definitions of governance commonly encompass key components such as the mechanisms of governing, the notion of interconnected networks, and the delineation of boundaries on governmental authority.

The concept of the New Public Governance does not represent a novel normative paradigm, but rather a fresh approach aimed at addressing the complexities of the current reality. It encompasses a domain characterized by intricate and unorganized elements, and introduces a novel framework for the interplay and engagement between the state and society, governments and citizens, as well as state and non-state institutions (Osborne, 2010). Rubin (2010) presents an alternative perspective on the New Public Governance, which sheds light on the functioning of contemporary government and the advancements it has made in recent decades. The model, which was implemented within the past decade, seeks to address the shortcomings of its predecessor, which critics argued was excessively aligned with the private sector and therefore unsuitable for decision-making and management within the Public Administration. When disparate models or reforms converge and one emerges as dominant, the amalgamation of ideas from the previous model with the new one gives rise to a multi-layered, intricate, and hybrid theory through a process akin to sedimentation.

The New Public Governance approach can be regarded as a distinct discourse in contrast to the Old Public Administration and the New Public Management (NPM), and it is firmly grounded in institutional and network theory. The NPG approach emphasizes inter-organizational relationships, governance processes, and the effectiveness and efficiency of public service organizations within their respective environments (Osborne, 2010). Public sector organizations also exhibit a prevailing inclination towards engaging with other stakeholders within their respective domains, recognizing the significance of socio-economic networks, and demonstrating proficiency in effectively managing the relationships forged within these networks (Badia, 2007).

According to Osborne (2010), New Public Governance envisions a plural and pluralist state in which interdependent players collaborate to offer public services and use a separate approach to influence the policy-making system. The governance debate in this approach revolves around political values. This movement seeks to enhance trust and legitimacy through three distinct characteristics that are not given due consideration in the NPM approach. These characteristics include a focus on values, the recognition of the significance of establishing government processes that facilitate consensus-building among various stakeholders, and the adoption of a co-production process involving the public, private market, and non-profit sectors to create public goods. (Crosby & Bryson, 2005; Larsen, 2008; Morgan et al., 2008; Osborne, 2008; O'Toole, 2010). In the NPG model, the role of the government includes the regulation and distribution of public incentives, and to act as an agent to support the participation of private and non-profit actors in acquiring ownership of the public good (Bao, Wang, Larsen, & Morgan, 2012).

This research aims to analyze two distinct approaches to governance: network governance and collaborative governance theories. The growing complexity of contemporary problems, commonly referred to as wicked problems, has generated a heightened interest in utilizing network structures for the examination of public administration, public policies, and governance structures. The absence of a precise definition for wicked problems notwithstanding, it is imperative to acknowledge the formulation proposed by Ackoff in 1974. According to Ackoff (1974), these problems are characterized by their inherent interconnectedness, as each problem is intricately linked to and influenced by other problems within a larger system of interrelated problems. The solution to wicked problems is rarely achieved by addressing each problem in isolation. According to Head and Alford (2013: 713), the attempt to address individual components of urban life, such as transportation, health, crime, and education, appears to exacerbate the overall situation (Roe, 2020). Furthermore, it can be argued that wicked problems have emerged as a result of novel challenges and crises of diverse nature, along with the subsequent limitations or abilities to effectively coordinate, prepare, and mobilize resources within governmental institutions. This emerging reality has compelled governments to embrace unconventional, interconnected approaches in addressing diverse challenges across various domains. These encompass public administration and governance, policies on climate change response, management of natural resources, business administration, cybernetic research, urban and regional planning, as well as healthcare programs and policies (Grippi, 2020).

## **2.7. The network and collaborative governance theories**

Numerous theories on governance have emerged as a result of these developments and responses to the aforementioned problems. This category of theories is grounded in a range of indirect policy instruments and inter-organizational arrangements. These are a consequence of both intergovernmental and intragovernmental relationships, which can take the form of structured partnerships or be facilitated through grant and contract agreements (such as privatizations and contracting) or regulatory mechanisms. The goal of these theories is to shape the way public issues are defined and policy solutions are derived. They emerge when organizations collaborate to achieve public goals (Koliba, Meek & Zia, 2014: 60).

### **2.7.1. Network Governance Theory**

Holton (2008: 4) offers a valuable contribution to the understanding of networks by defining them as distinct forms of multi-social organization, separate from markets and hierarchies. In today's context, the public sector exhibits distinct features such as the presence of networks, multi-sector collaborations, and a lack of complete authority over public affairs. According to numerous scholars, a comprehensive understanding of the network governance theory necessitates the inclusion of all organizations that hold significant influence over policy outcomes. Indeed,

“The main focus in this definition is the distinction between institutions and organizations, the first is considered rules and the latter are actors or aggregations of actors, action arenas, and outcomes of social interactions, therefore institutions are formal rules and informal norms that shape what actors can or not and may do in policy settings” (Baldwin, Chen & Cole, 2019).

Klijn (2008) asserts that governments are currently engaged in the exploration of a new mode of governance, characterized by the utilization of public-private partnerships, interactive decision-making processes, and the active involvement of diverse stakeholders. This transformative approach is reshaping the traditional role of institutions. According to this perspective, governments have become increasingly reliant on societal actors due to the heightened complexity of the challenges they face. Numerous challenges arise as a result of the clash of divergent values and the proliferation of various actors involved in the policy decision-making process. According to Pierre and Peters (2000: 194), the power of the state is now contingent on its context and entrepreneurial abilities, rather than being solely derived from the constitutional and legal strength of its institutions, as it was in the past.



Furthermore, as posited by Klijn (2008), it is not pragmatic nor logical to differentiate between governance and governance networks, as the underlying theoretical frameworks of both concepts are essentially identical. More in detail, governance refers to the intricate process occurring within governance networks, specifically involving public policymaking and implementation. This process is characterized by the interactions and interdependencies among governmental bodies, civil society organizations, and business actors, within a complex and multi-layered framework. The emergence of new forms of collaboration among diverse societal actors has led to the conceptualization of governance networks, which can be likened to the notion of joined-up governments. The concept of joined-up government embodies several fundamental characteristics outlined in the governance network literature. It pertains to the objective of attaining collaborative policy action that is coordinated both horizontally and vertically (Klijn, 2008). Consequently, it can be regarded as a type of governance and a crucial focus for enhancing public policy, as suggested by Delany-Crowe et al. (2019). The primary emphasis lies in the collaboration among various stakeholders and governments to optimize the utilization of existing resources and facilitate the delivery of integrated services (Delany-Crowe et al., 2019; Klijn, 2008).

Rhodes (1997) was a scholar who extensively examined the complex relationship between governance and inter-organizational networks. He conceptualized governance as a self-organizing phenomenon marked by the interdependence of organizations and ongoing game-like interactions among network members. These interactions are driven by the necessity to exchange resources and are underpinned by trust and negotiated regulations (Koliba, Meek, & Zia, 2014: 91). Koliba, Meek, and Zia (2014: 115) propose that governance networks encompass a range of activities including coordinated actions, resource exchange, information sharing, capacity building, learning, and knowledge transfer, all aimed at achieving policy goals. In addition, governance networks exhibit distinct characteristics compared to other types of inter-organizational networks due to their involvement in policy-related activities (Grippi, 2020).

Meek posits that governance networks have the potential to align with different layers of the policy stream. Furthermore, it is feasible to discern a structural typology of governance structures within inter-organizational networks. In their study, Provan and Kenis (2007) classify various modes of governance networks by examining the nature of relationships formed among the actors involved. The self-governed network is considered the most collaborative structure for network governance, as it is distinguished by the presence of balanced flows of ties and authorities (Provan & Kenis, 2007). In contrast, within a participant-governed or shared network, the presence of a distinct governing entity is absent.

Instead, all network participants engage in monitoring and coordinating activities through both formal and informal interactions. Consequently, authority and power are dispersed throughout the network, resulting in horizontally oriented relationships. Another type of network governance is the lead organization network, which exhibits a centralization of power and authority within or facilitated by the primary organization responsible for executing and orchestrating significant network-wide initiatives (Provan & Kenis, 2007). The final type of network governance that has been identified by Provan and Kenis (2007) is known as the network administrative organization (NAO). This particular form of governance is distinguished by the presence of a coordinating body that oversees and manages all the activities within the inter-organizational network. The coordinating entity, which can exhibit either a straightforward or intricate framework, assumes the responsibility of supervising the network by overseeing and governing the various activities within the network.

The emergence of new networks gives rise to a legitimacy problem due to the presence of multiple actors within these networks. This problem arises from the existence of a normative system encompassing norms, beliefs, and values. Consequently, it becomes necessary to assess whether the actions undertaken by these networks are deemed desirable or not. Legitimacy, as a concept, is predominantly a subjective perception that is constructed and attributed by external actors. The attainment of status and acceptance is bestowed upon individuals by others, contingent upon the shared culture and established norms of the society in which social networks are integrated. The concept of legitimacy within networks is a multifaceted phenomenon, encompassing various levels of pressure that influence news networks. These levels include the legitimacy pressure exerted on the network-as-form, the network-as-entity, and the network-as-interaction (Human & Provan, 2000). The initial level of pressure arises from internal factors, as it necessitates the acknowledgment of all actors involved in the networks as legitimate. The subsequent level of pressure is contingent upon the shared objectives, structure, and governance of the network itself, as well as the actors' ability to integrate their activities, or at least a subset thereof, to effectively communicate a unified message. The final level of pressure pertains to the cooperative interactions among the actors, wherein trust must be established within a competitive framework. Only when these interactions and conflicts are deemed legitimate can the network function efficiently and expediently. Moreover, individuals perceive tensions within collaborations as an opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills in effectively navigating conflicts. The presence of tension, when coupled with a cooperative atmosphere, leads to a propensity for ongoing interpersonal engagement (Blomgren Bingham & O'Leary, 2008: 126; Grippi, 2020).

### 2.7.2. Collaborative Governance Theory

Collaborative governance might be defined as:

“a governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets” (Ansell and Gash, 2008: 544).

Collaborative governance “brings public and private stakeholders together in collective forums with public agencies to engage in consensus-oriented decision-making” (Ansell and Gash, 2008: 543). In particular, collaboration refers to “the linking or sharing of information, resources, activities, and capabilities by organizations to achieve jointly an outcome that could not be achieved by the organizations separately” (Bryson et al, 2006: 44).

According to Head and Alford (2013), the approach being discussed provides a means of acknowledging the intricate nature of contemporary issues. By involving a diverse range of stakeholders, it becomes feasible to achieve favorable results. There exists a range of dimensions that can be used to delineate the concept of collaboration. This is especially relevant in the context of collaborations that take place within and across sectors and organizations, involving a diverse array of partners and actors, both in terms of their size and their behavioral tendencies (whether they exhibit like-mindedness or homogeneity). Collaboration can occur in situations where participants share common goals, as well as in cases where their goals differ. Furthermore, collaboration can manifest as a mandatory requirement, but it can also emerge voluntarily or spontaneously (Blomgren Bingham & O'Leary, 2008). Furthermore, it is important to note that collaboration can take place regardless of the presence of broader public participation or the involvement of professional facilitators, as observed in both controversial and less contentious matters (Blomgren Bingham & O'Leary, 2008).

Ansel and Gash (2007: 545) define collaborative governance as a form of governance that involves the joint efforts of various private and public actors to provide public goods. This approach relies on specific processes to establish laws and regulations.

The public actors encompass various public agencies, including bureaucracies, courts, legislatures, and other governmental bodies at the local, national, supranational, and international levels. On the other hand, the private actors consist of firms, civic society, and non-profit organizations (Ansell and Gash, 2008). These collective entities collaborate to generate public value and deliberate on the provision of public goods. Typically, the responsibility for generating public goods lies with public agencies. However, the

involvement of nonstate stakeholders, specifically citizens as individuals and organized groups, is essential for various aspects of the process. The deliberative and multilateral process necessitates the collective participation of all actors, including agencies and stakeholders. According to this perspective, collaboration entails the active involvement of non-state stakeholders in the decision-making process, while acknowledging that ultimate authority may still rest with public agencies. Collaborative governance relies on formal collaboration, which sets it apart from less structured and traditional modes of agency interest group interaction. According to Walter and Petr (2000), collaborative governance pertains to the examination of public policies and issues, emphasizing formal activities that encompass the utilization of shared resources within joint activities and structures. Furthermore, it is important to note that collaborative governance should not be perceived as a zero-sum game, where one stakeholder emerges as the sole victor. Typically, stakeholders involved in collaborative governance maintain an adversarial relationship with one another, yet they actively collaborate to collectively achieve shared objectives (Ansell and Gash, 2008).

The external environment plays a crucial role in organizational governance, particularly in relation to macro-level environmental factors such as system stability and resource availability. These factors significantly impact the governance of collaborations (Stone, Crosby & Bryson, 2010).

### **2.7.3. Overlaps between the two theories**

The concepts of collaborative governance and network exhibit a certain degree of interconnectedness and may pertain to comparable phenomena, albeit with some differences. The term "policy network" encompasses diverse and pluralistic forms of collaboration between the state and society. This collaboration involves the participation of both public agencies and nonstate stakeholders' groups, who engage in various modes of deliberation and decision-making. This similarity between collaborative governance and policy networks has been highlighted by Ansell and Gash (2008).

The primary distinction among these concepts lies in the fact that collaborative governance pertains to a deliberate and structured approach that involves the inclusion of the aforementioned diverse actors in decision-making processes that are multilateral and consensus-oriented. Conversely, cooperation in policy networks can be informal and may not be explicitly acknowledged (Ansell and Gash, 2008).

Collaboration and networks are often regarded as interchangeable concepts in the field of public management literature (Stone, Crosby & Bryson, 2010).

According to Scott, Thomas, and Magallanes (2019), there exists a possibility of combining these two theories. Specifically, within the context of collaborative governance, it becomes feasible to discern various stakeholders who collaborate within diverse network structures. The influence on collaborative processes in these networks, also referred to as "collaborative platforms" (Ansell & Gash, 2008), is contingent upon the number of participants involved (Scott et al., 2019). Undoubtedly, the probability of attaining an agreement and subsequently achieving desired outcomes diminishes with the escalation in the number of actors involved. This is because each additional actor introduces a distinct array of goals and preferences, which may be in direct opposition to one another. At the same time, it is imperative to ensure the inclusion of an adequate number of stakeholders to optimize the efficiency and effectiveness of the collaborative network from the standpoint of achieving desired outcomes. According to this perspective, the functioning of collaborative governance institutions is shaped by the attributes and organizational arrangements of the actors that form part of the policy network within which these institutions operate. According to Scott and colleagues (2019), the sole means of reducing uncertainty in networks is through information and knowledge exchange and fostering greater levels of trust. Additionally, collaborative governance institutions can be regarded as a mechanism for facilitating stakeholder connectivity and promoting their active participation.

## **2.8. Collaborative Public Management Approach and Performance Management.**

The collaborative public management theory is the closest theory to the citizens and the local level. The main focus is on the local problems and trying to reach community goals at the organizational level through collaboration. Collaborative public management refers to the facilitation and coordination of multi-organizational arrangements aimed at addressing complex problems that cannot be solved by a single organization. This approach involves the collaboration and cooperation of various stakeholders from private and non-profit sectors, government entities, communities, and other actors within society (Blomgren Bingham & O'Leary, 2008). This need for collaboration between different actors has been given a variety of names, such as alliances, platforms, coalitions, community-based collaboratives, networks, and partnerships, and includes a variety of different ways to collaborate (Connelly et al., 2014; Vivona, Demircioglu & Audretsch, 2023).

Another important definition of the concept of collaborative public management is provided by Lisa Blomgren Bingham (2008), according to her idea this approach

“Describes the process of facilitating and operating in multiorganizational arrangements to solve problems that cannot be solved or easily solved by single organizations. Collaborative means to co-labor to achieve common goals working across boundaries in multisector and multi-actor relationships. Collaboration is based on the value of reciprocity” (p.3).

In this sense, collaboration could be seen as a dynamic and emergent process that involves an increasing number of actors (Poocharoen & Wong, 2016). There are two ways to frame the concept of collaboration: the cyclical approach, which involves negotiation, decision-making, implementation, and potential renewal of collaboration; and the linear approach, which places collaboration at the highest level of partner engagement. (Poocharoen & Wong, 2016: 610).

Because of the strategic position, that nowadays small entities, such as cities and citizens, occupy in the decision-making processes it is necessary to analyze this position in the light of the concept of collaborative public management. Indeed, collaborative public management should analyze the collaboration between and among organizations and the role of the public citizens in governance. The complex nature of public service delivery at the local level and the relative collaboration needs an inclusive theoretical framework. Indeed, joint actions and decisions usually are generated by resource dependence, exchange, and transaction cost economics. It is possible to identify different types of motivation at different levels, such as the sectoral, the organizational, and the individual levels, that push different actors to collaborate. Collaboration is an interactive process between organizations that encompasses negotiation, development, and evaluation of obligations and implementation. According to Thomson and Perry as cited by Blomgren Bingham & O’Leary (2008):

“Collaboration is a process in which autonomous actors interact through formal and informal negotiation, jointly creating rules and structures governing their relationships and ways to act or decide on the issues that brought them together; it is a process involving shared norms and mutually beneficial interactions.” (Blomgren Bingham & O’Leary, 2008: 98).

This definition of collaboration is embedded in five dimensions of the collaboration itself, namely that one of governance, administration, mutuality, norms, and organizational autonomy, that involves process-related activities. These activities are linked to the above-mentioned five dimensions of collaboration. In particular: governance is linked to the decision-making process about rules that govern this collaborative effort; the administration dimension is concerned with how the operating system works and communicates; the



organizational autonomy is based on the activity of balancing the self-interests of the single entity and collective interests of the group; the mutuality dimension is represented by the activity of working together, even if there are differences between the actors, to arrive at mutually beneficial relationships; and finally, norms are based on the development of trust and modes of reciprocity (Blomgren Bingham & O'Leary, 2008).

The multidimensional model of collaboration is useful to analyze the relative outcomes, which are: the perceived effectiveness of the collaboration; the perceived increase in quality of working relationships; the perceived broadening of organizations' view; the perceived increase of network density, namely the interactions between the network's participants; and at last, the perceived increase in power relationships among network's partners (Blomgren Bingham & O'Leary, 2008: 110). What links the above-mentioned concepts is that community service delivery is often coordinated through networks, designed and created by a hierarchical coordinating agency. There is also the possibility of having more voluntary and self-organizing intergovernmental relationships when there are problems of fragmentation, such as the voluntary service agreements among local government units (Blomgren Bingham & O'Leary, 2008: 195). Indeed, local governments usually share information with all the active actors present in the territory to respond to emergencies or just the delivery of routine services, creating a decentralized regionalism characterized by horizontal interlocal agreements and functionally and geographically defined overlays of nested service units between networks. These institutional mechanisms are established through bilateral agreements and multilateral collaborations involving two or more governments and local stakeholders (Blomgren Bingham & O'Leary, 2008). Public institutions and managers have a crucial responsibility to maintain a balance between public service values like efficiency and effectiveness, and other values such as democracy. These additional values include equity, political accountability, and responsiveness (Moynihan et al., 2016). In order to achieve optimal efficiency and effectiveness collaborative public management encompasses collaboration and engagement throughout the entire policy process. This includes identifying problems, determining preferences, prioritizing policy options, selecting an approach, adopting and implementing policies, and reinforcing them through performance management (Choi & Moynihan, 2019; Grippi, 2020).

Poocharoen and Wong (2016) suggest that collaborative relations typically progress through stages, resembling policy processes such as planning, negotiation, operation, and management. Alternatively, they can be likened to project management processes in the private sector, which involve stages of agreement, performance, and termination. Traditionally, performance management has been employed as a system by top managers

within an organization to oversee projects and establish performance indicators for evaluating performance. The combination of collaboration, which is focused on the beyond of the organizations, and of performance management, based on the efforts within the agencies, leads to better results (Choi & Moynihan, 2019).

In collaborative or network settings, the analysis of performance management should prioritize the evaluation of the network's effectiveness, specifically in relation to the overall mission of the network (Kapucu & Demiroz, 2011). In this sense, one possible basic evaluation criterion is its contribution to participating actors.

Collaborative performance management has been used for several reasons by firms in interfirm relationships. These include achieving collaborative objectives, sharing risks, preserving market position, and gaining access to complementary resources that may be unavailable or too expensive, challenging, or time-consuming to develop internally. (Dekker et al., 2016).

According to Busi and Bititci (2006: 6), performance management in collaborative enterprises is “the process of using inter-organizational systems to collaboratively measuring the performance of collaborative enterprise processes and using the measurement to enable decision-makers to proactively and strategically manage the collaborative enterprise itself”. Collaborative performance management in this sense is influenced by different disciplines, namely: enterprise collaboration, operations management, business process management/engineering; performance measurement/management, decision support; information and communication management; organizational behavior, and knowledge management (Ukko & Saunila, 2020). Managing activities in collaborative interfirm relationships involves performance measurement, information sharing among partners, and interaction among the boundary spanners of the actors (Dekker et al., 2016). Dekker et al. (2016) have identified three management practices in interfirm relationships that are derived from basic management control design choices. These practices include determining which performance-related objectives should be monitored, deciding what information should be shared within the collaboration, and establishing guidelines for partner actions based on the provided information. The authors suggest that performance management practices are employed to facilitate the attainment of collaborative goals by effectively addressing and controlling potential risks linked to collaboration. This study and theory can be relevant to public-private collaboration due to the similarities observed in the relationships formed among different actors involved. In a network context, Mandell and Keast have identified different performance management, and tools according to the type of interactions among and between network actors that could be cooperative, coordinative, or collaborative



(Kapucu & Demiroz, 2011). In coordinative networks, performance management tools might be useful and appropriate because there is no interdependence. On the opposite side, there are collaborative networks, characterized by a strong interdependence of the actors, usually coming from multiple sectors, based on high levels of trust and dense relationships. Despite the possible similarities, several scholars have identified different challenges in applying performance management in collaborative public settings. Due to resource sharing, organizations lack complete control over the resources they use and may not have control over program goals and agendas due to alignment with other actors (Poocharoen & Wong, 2016). Thirdly, performance information is collected and interpreted by partners using different performance indicators. Fourthly, accountability could be difficult to assess, and consequentially it is challenging to link rewards or punishments to the parties. Lastly, there is the need to spend more time communicating and building relationships that may cause a delay in projects' realization. Additionally, it is crucial to have a comprehensive understanding of how performance management should be perceived within collaborative environments and how these elements can interact with one another. Scholars have identified two key aspects of interaction: the success of collaborations, the role of managers in collaboration, and the evaluation of performance (Poocharoen & Wong, 2016). Indeed, collaborations should be evaluated through broad indicators such as equity, transparency, value creation, and accountability, or identifying, measuring, and evaluating sectoral issues. Concerning the performance evaluation fundamental features of collaboration are mutual respect and learning rather than command and control. Indeed, performance could be evaluated in different manners depending on the context. To understand the relationship between performance management and collaboration according to Poocharoen and Wong (2016) it is important to categorize different forms of collaboration in the light of the level of reciprocal dependency. In particular, they have identified three different modes of collaborative relations. Firstly, a non-dependent collaboration is characterized by a pre-contract stage where a relationship is established but negotiations are a continuum. Secondly, there is a dependent collaboration where one partner is the sole or dominant financier in the project and the others have a subordinate status. Thirdly, there is an interdependent collaboration where all of the partners share the financial burden and it is impossible to find a dominant position. These types of collaboration according to these authors are linked to a different mode of performance management and use of performance indicators. In their study, the researchers found that as collaboration deepens and becomes more interdependent, the performance management system becomes less explicit and more focused on intangible and nonquantifiable measures of performance. These measures include trust, customer

satisfaction, respect, and professionalism, all of which contribute to accountability. This finding was based on six concrete collaborations analyzed in the study (Poocharoen & Wong, 2016). Moreover, partners co-design, co-production, and co-evaluation include the co-creation of the performance management system, which means that indicators and interpretations are shared and agreed together in a continuous sharing of understanding of what and how they can achieve together (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Grippi, 2020).

Indeed, according to Poocharoen and Wong (2016), a performance management system should be used as a continuous method to control projects and service delivery systems in a collaborative governance context and it should become a tool for mutual learning and improvement both for institutional actors and nongovernmental ones, which lead to better intermediate and final outcomes. In this sense, thanks to the mutual exchange among and between actors, collaboration could be seen as a “high intensity” mode of interaction that increases and increases the interdependence and the joint actions of the different actors. Moreover, these high-intensity interactions, in the long run, may lay the foundation for voluntary collaboration among and between different actors.

Mechanisms for voluntary collaboration may have different forms including agreements between interlocal actors, regional councils, partnerships, and intergovernmental contracts, but the focus of these mechanisms relies on the voluntary choice of local units to participate. The voluntary participation and the subsequent collaboration between the actors may produce benefits to participants and the community as a whole, these positive exchanges build reputation and trust and in the long run produce a feedback mechanism that enhances future cooperation and collective action (Blomgren Bingham & O’Leary, 2008; Feiock, 2007). In particular, the development of trust is similar to the development of a second-order institution created to solve some underlying collective problems.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of the methods employed in the study, including the research paradigm, dynamic performance management & and governance approach, research design, instruments validity and reliability, sources of data, collection methods, procedure and management and ethics, Sampling Technique, Size, and Selection.

#### **3.1. Research Paradigm**

Research adheres to scientific procedures and methodologies to investigate phenomena and address issues within a social context where problems arise. It facilitates the interaction between researchers and the study of social behaviors and ongoing activities. During the course of conducting research, the researcher must provide a philosophical and theoretical framework for their work. Researchers must establish their perspectives to observe the world and phenomena, which in turn influence their chosen paths for investigating such phenomena (Khatri, 2020). Hence, it is imperative to establish a solid foundation for research by adopting a research paradigm, first articulated by Khun (1962).

In essence, a research paradigm pertains to the theoretical or philosophical foundation upon which a research study is based. The term "paradigm" is employed to characterize the researcher's perspective or "worldview" (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). A worldview refers to a particular perspective, way of thinking, school of thought, or set of shared beliefs that shapes the understanding and interpretation of research data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose that a paradigm consists of four essential components: epistemology, ontology, methodology, and axiology. Ontology refers to the understanding of reality, while epistemology focuses on the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the observer and reality. Methodology pertains to the suitable approach for conducting systematic analysis, and, lastly, axiology concerns the ethical aspects of research (Mertens, 2010; Khatri, 2020).

Therefore, the research paradigm is a framework that shapes a researcher's philosophical stance and has important consequences for all aspects of the research process. This includes determining the nature of reality, identifying the types and sources of knowledge, selecting the appropriate methodology and methods, and focusing on ethical considerations (Huges, 2010; Khatri, 2020).

The existence of numerous philosophical paradigms in contemporary times can be attributed to the progress in human thinking and the diverse approaches used to explain the origins and consequences of phenomena that surround the world. The two initial traditional philosophical paradigms, namely positivism and interpretivism, have spawned numerous other philosophical paradigms (Adom, et al., 2016).

This study was undertaken within the framework of the constructivism paradigm. This paradigm, inspired by the interpretivism paradigm in philosophy, suggests that individuals actively construct their understanding and knowledge of the world through experiences and reflection. This concept is based on the idea that people gain a substantial amount of their knowledge from personal experiences (Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Cashman et al., 2008; Hein, 1991).

According to Kalender (2007), learning is most effective when the learner actively engages in experimentation and real-world situations to gain knowledge. The constructivist philosophical paradigm is commonly linked to the qualitative research approach. Indeed, such an approach aims to comprehend a phenomenon being studied through the perspectives and experiences of the participants, employing various data collection methods. Additionally, interpretations of the phenomena being investigated are based on personal experiences as well as that of the study participants. The researcher engages in a process of critical analysis to determine the validity of the information given. In his pursuit of understanding the authentic condition of the issue under investigation, the researcher is occasionally involved in the activities as they are performed by others within their natural environments, thereby enabling firsthand experience or observation of others' experiences (Adom et al., 2016). Similar to qualitative researchers, constructivists argue that reality is subjective because it is shaped by the various viewpoints of people involved, resulting in a multitude of interpretations.

Moreover, the researcher derives significance from events by engaging in interactions with others within social and cultural contexts. Research that is based on the constructivist philosophical paradigm typically commences with an open-ended inquiry utilizing research questions. After the analysis of the study's data, conclusions are formulated, which may be either tentative or valid (Adom et al., 2016).

### **3.2. Fundamentals of System Dynamics: stock-and-flow and feedback structures**

System Dynamics (SD) is a useful methodology for gaining a deeper understanding of intricate systems, as it possesses the ability to encapsulate the adaptive and feedback characteristics inherent to these systems. It involves conducting direct research to identify a model structure that can generate a feedback hypothesis for the observed behavior of the system. The ultimate objective is to expedite the process of designing system policies that can enhance the system's behavior (Wolstenholme, 1985). In this context, methodology refers to the comprehensive and iterative investigative process through which concepts, philosophies, and theories can be expressed, regardless of the subject matter or problem under consideration. It is important to note that the term "methodology" should not be conflated with its usage in the context of a particular technique, where it denotes a set of procedural steps required for implementing it (e.g., linear programming methodology) (Wolstenholme, 1985).

SD adopts an interdisciplinary approach to capture the different nuances underlying the behavior of dynamic and complex systems. SD is based on the theoretical foundations of nonlinear dynamics and feedback control, which have been explored in the fields of physics, mathematics, and engineering. By leveraging these principles, SD aims to understand and analyze the behavior of complex systems. This interdisciplinary approach incorporates insights from cognitive and social psychology, economics, anthropology, and other social sciences to further enhance its understanding of system dynamics (Sterman, 2000). By building simulation models SD allows to analysis of such complex systems and tests policies designed to promote systemic transformation.

#### **3.2.1. Stock-and-flow modelling**

Stock-and-flow structures are fundamental to portray accumulations, time delays, and non-linear relationships. Dealing with complex systems and wicked problems requires understanding the above-mentioned factors (i.e., portray accumulations, time delays, and non-linear relationships). Accumulation represents an increasing or decreasing gradual process of a systemic element in a given time span. Time delay represents the amount of time that it takes for a system to change. SD uses *stocks* to depict the system's status and contribute to providing information to support decision-makers' actions (Sterman, 2000). Stock variables are visually depicted as rectangular shapes, symbolizing a conceptual container that holds the content of the stock, which are accumulated and drained over time respectively by *inflows* and *outflows*, whose equations represent the decision functions affected by information inputs (Forrester, 1961: 81-82). The basic structure of a stock-and-

flow is portrayed in Figure 2 a) below. Both flows can be merged into a single net flow that portrays the “net-change” of a stock, as portrayed in Figure 2 b) (Sterman, 2000: 191-197).

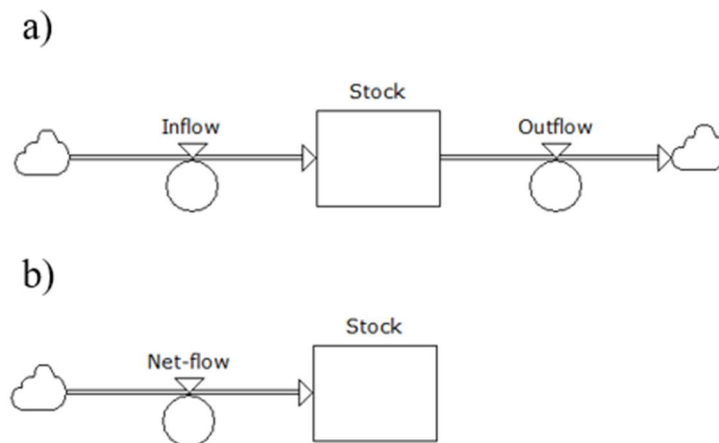


Figure 2. Examples of stock-and-flow structure (Adapted by the researcher from Sterman, 2000. Created with Powesim Studio)

Stock-and-flow structures, together with feedback processes, time delays, and nonlinearities determine the dynamics of complex systems. The majority of stocks possess mechanisms that control inflows and outflows. These mechanisms are commonly referred to as "feedback loops."

### 3.2.2. Feedback Analysis

Feedback loops function to maintain a specified level of a given stock. Indeed, the emergence of complex behaviors, as depicted by stock-and-flow structures, typically stems from the interplay of system components through feedback mechanisms, rather than solely from the inherent complexity of individual components. The emergence of all dynamics can be attributed to the interplay between two different kinds of feedback loops: positive (or self-reinforcing) loops and negative (or self-correcting) loops (Sterman, 2000; Bernabè, 2011). Positive feedback loops tend to strengthen or magnify the existing conditions within a system. Reinforcing loops encompass all processes that inherently produce either growth or decay. Negative feedback loops serve to counteract and oppose the occurrence of change. Balancing loops refer to processes that tend to self-limitation, as well as a drive towards achieving balance and equilibrium (Sterman, 2000: 12-13). When analyzing a feedback loop, a crucial step is to evaluate the loop's nature by multiplying the polarities of its causal links. This process aids in determining whether the resulting value is positive or negative. Another approach entails quantifying the occurrences of negative polarity within the connections. If

the count is odd, the resulting feedback will tend to be negative. On the other hand, if the count is an even number, the feedback will lean towards being positive.

It is crucial to highlight the importance of knowing polarity in the context of the interplay between two elements, particularly in a one-to-one interaction. As highlighted by Sterman (2000) When there is a positive relationship between element A and element B, it indicates that any changes in A, whether they are increases or decreases, will result in corresponding changes in B. These changes in B will occur in conjunction with the changes in A. On the other hand, in the event of a negative relationship, it suggests that changes in variable A lead to variable B moving in the opposite direction. Specifically, B decreases when A increases or B increases when A decreases (Sterman, 2000: 139). A comprehensive understanding of feedback loop dynamics requires a nuanced comprehension of polarity and its implications.. Systems' feedback structures are represented through causal loop diagrams (CLDs), figure 3 below portrays an example of two simple CLDs showing a reinforcing or positive loop (a) and a balancing or negative (b) loop.

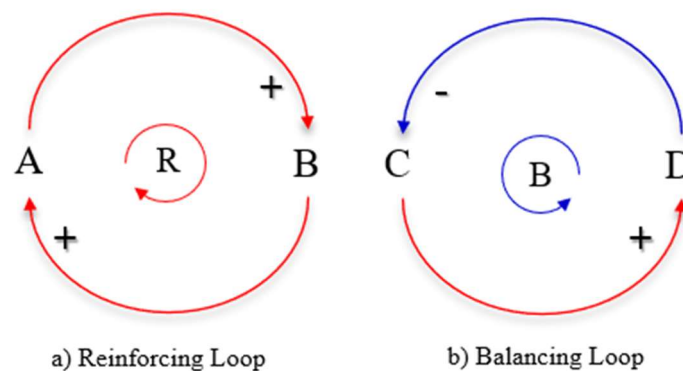


Figure 3. Examples of reinforcing (a) and balancing (b) feedback loops (Created by the author with Microsoft Powerpoint, adapted from Sterman, 2000)

### 3.2.3. Recurring behavioral modes

The behavior of a system is a result of its underlying structure. which encompasses feedback loops, stocks and flows, and nonlinearities that arise from the interplay between the physical and institutional structure of the system and the decision-making processes of agents operating within it (Sterman, 2000; Bernabè, 2011). As stated by Forrester (1969: 107):

“Like all systems, the complex system is an interlocking structure of feedback loops [...] This loop structure surrounds all decisions public or private, conscious or unconscious. The processes of man and nature, of psychology and physics, of medicine and engineering all fall within this structure.”

There are different modes of behavior in dynamics systems that can be identified according to the basic feedback structures generating them, these are: a) growth, b) goal seeking, c) and oscillations (portrayed in Figure 4). The first arises from reinforcing feedback loops, as the quantity increases, the net increase also increases, thereby further enhancing the quantity and ultimately resulting in accelerated growth.

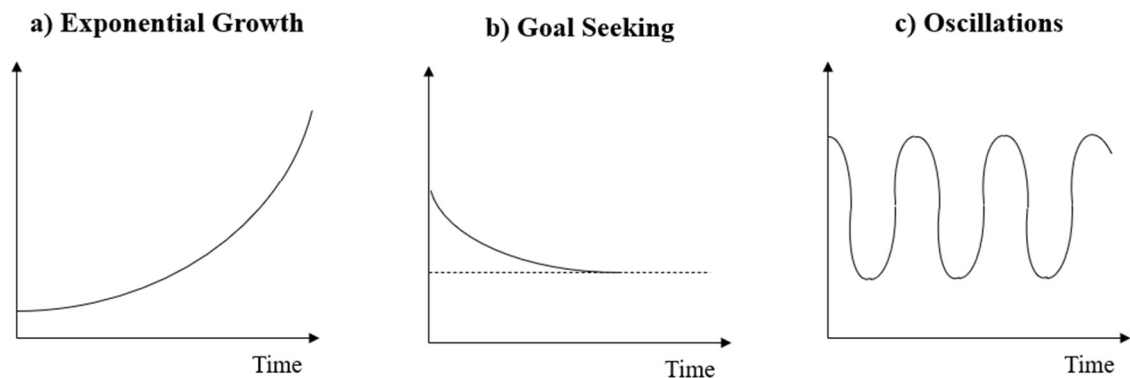


Figure 4. Basic modes of behavior in dynamic systems (Adapted from Sterman, 2000: 108).

The goal-seeking behavior is characterized by the predominance of the balancing loop which brings the state of the system in equilibrium according to a desired state or goal. The negative loop counteracts possible disturbances that may change the state of the system far from the goal. If there is a discrepancy between the goal and the actual state, corrective actions are initiated to bring the state back to the desired level.

Lastly, oscillations are generated by negative feedback loops, which attempt to eliminate the discrepancy from the actual to the desired state. However, the goal of the system is always overshoot and undershoot due to the existing time delays which forces the system to adjust too much and triggers new correction actions in the opposite directions. For example, such delays can be caused by the discrepancy in perceiving the state of the system due to the time needed to measure and report it (Sterman, 2000: 108-114).

There are more complex patterns of behavior resulting from nonlinear interactions of these structures with one another, i.e., a) s-shaped growth, b) s-shaped growth with overshoot, and c) overshoot and collapse.



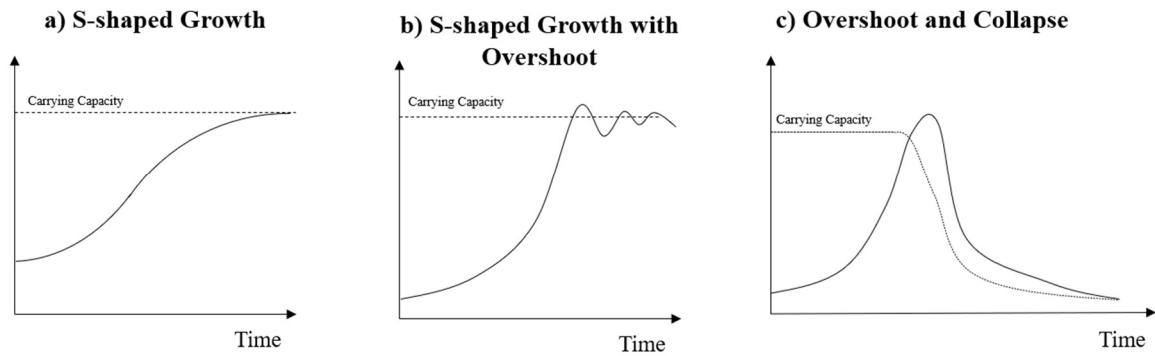


Figure 5. Other modes of behavior: a) S-shaped Growth, b) S-shaped Growth with Overshoot, and c) Overshoot and Collapse (Adapted from Sterman, 2000: 118-123).

The s-shaped growth mode of behavior is one of the commonly observed behaviors since it represents the limit to growth that all systems have. It is characterized by firstly the dominance of a reinforcing loop causing exponential growth, which gradually slows down due to a negative feedback loop that pushes the state to the system close to the goal or desired state to reach equilibrium (Sterman, 2000: 118).

The second mode of behavior builds on the first one but time delays in negative feedback loops lead to the overshoot and oscillation of the state of the system around the carrying capacity (Sterman, 2000: 121).

Lastly, the overshoot and collapse mode of behavior builds upon the idea that the carrying capacity is not fixed as for the s-shaped growth. On the contrary, once approached by the growth the carrying capacity drastically drops and so does the state of the system leading to a continuous decline. A clear example can be done by using predators and prey. Once the carrying capacity of prey is reached, predators due to the impossibility of finding more prey start dying. Even if the number of predators is declining, the remaining ones still kill prey so the carrying capacity is reducing. If there is no regeneration of carrying capacity the equilibrium of the system is extinction (Sterman, 2000: 123).

### 3.2.4. Applying the structure and behavioral analysis to urban settings.

The application of the principle of structure and behavior can be extended to various contexts, including the governance of urban neighborhoods. By employing this approach, policy practitioners have the potential to evaluate current performance in relation to long-term performance.

From a sustainable development perspective, an urban area can be seen as a complex system that exhibits four distinct patterns of behavior, as highlighted by Bianchi (2016: 41) which serve as indicators of its overall performance. The aforementioned patterns encompass various stages of the system, including crisis prevention, stabilization, restructuring, and

revitalization. Figure 6 illustrates the four above-mentioned patterns of behavior that can be employed to represent the performance trajectories of urban areas and cities (Bianchi, 2016: 41). These four states can be associated with two main strategic perspectives that may enhance the performance of neighborhoods: maintenance and redesign. The first refers to the act of preserving the existing level of performance, whereas the latter entails making modifications to the underlying model that influences the performance of a neighborhood (Bianchi, 2016: 43). The initial phase of crisis prevention involves identifying indicators that may show unsustainable growth and taking appropriate action by utilizing performance drivers to enhance growth. In this context, it is possible to identify a corresponding balancing loop that can be implemented to steer the system towards a sustainable goal-seeking behavior. The concept of stabilization refers to the set of circumstances that uphold the current level of performance with minimal alterations. The emergence of sustainable conditions in the system is often attributed to the presence of multiple balancing loops (Omong, 2021). Oscillatory behaviors in the system can arise when decision-makers implement adjustments of varying strength. The subsequent phase involves the utilization of system dynamics principles to facilitate intervention aimed at mitigating an imminent crisis that has the potential to impede the progress of the urban area. In the context of system dynamics, the phenomenon of growth is facilitated by employing a reinforcing loop. To exert influence and exercise control over this growth, decision-makers have the ability to step in by taking action on the corresponding balancing loop. The goal of this intervention is to achieve stability within the system, allowing the corresponding reinforcing loop to take on a major position. The revitalization phase involves modifying a holistic urban development strategy to incorporate feasible and sustainable outcomes. Furthermore, this process involves the identification and subsequent implementation of strategies to mitigate the prevailing reinforcing loop that impacts the occurrence of urban decay. The existence of such a loop has the potential to result in the depletion of essential shared strategic resources. To stimulate growth, decision-makers must recognize and address the reinforcing loop that is associated with this objective (Bianchi, 2016: 41-44; Vignieri, 2016: 22-26). According to Madanipour (2012: 64), decision-makers have the potential to enhance their decision-making abilities by utilizing the framework of system dynamics to gain a comprehensive understanding of long-term trends in urban growth. Consequently, it is imperative for policy actors to not only devise strategies for community transformation but also to implement policies that facilitate the delivery of fundamental public and social services, as these factors have the potential to influence urban development over an extended period. Urban

regeneration programs can be employed as a means to pursue long-term strategies of urban transformation, as observed through the framework of system dynamics (Omong, 2021).

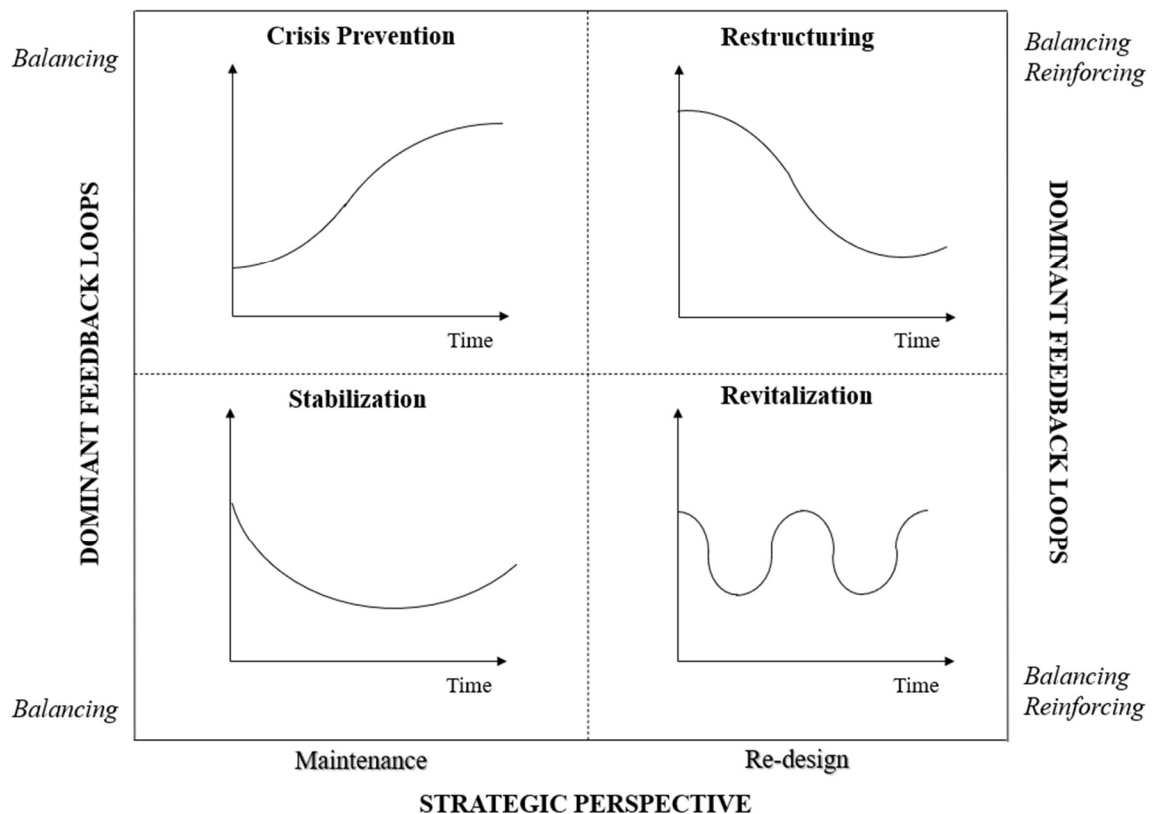


Figure 6. An SD approach to frame local area performance (Adapted from Bianchi, 2016: 43)

### 3.4. The need for Dynamic Performance Management and Governance approaches

The Dynamic Performance Governance framework (DPG) is an extension of the Dynamic Performance Management (DPM), which is the reason why the nomenclature for DPG can be Dynamic Performance Management as applied to Governance. Both DPM and DPG have a goal of providing support to policy-makers as well as practitioners in the development and implementation of effective and efficient policies (Bianchi et al., 2019; Bianchi, 2021; 2022).

The DPM approach helps decision-makers capture the causal relationships of systems' results over time. This approach combines System Dynamics and Performance Management to frame dynamic complexity, understand the linkages between outputs and outcomes, detect existing delays, and set proper boundaries in strategic planning. By considering these factors The DPM tool helps policymakers and practitioners in understanding the feedback structure that influences performance. It also enables them to devise novel strategies to enhance organizational performance (Bianchi, 2016; Bianchi & Rivenbark, 2014). In this perspective, DPM may enhance performance management systems

since such an approach focuses not only on tangible resources but also frames intangible ones (trust in government, leadership, image, governance capacity, etc.) as well (Xavier & Bianchi, 2020).

### **3.5. Applying DPM to policy design and implementation**

The DPM framework captures key output measures, policy outcomes, and performance drivers that influence these results. Performance drivers are assessed by comparing the current levels of strategic resources to the desired or benchmark levels, using ratios (Bianchi, 2016). Tracking these critical success factors contributes to better capturing possible effects, thus, helping decision makers to foresee unintended consequences and counteract them by improving the performance (Bianchi, 2016). Ongoing measuring performance drivers can help achieve sustainable outputs and outcomes in various organizations. Volume indicators, as suggested by Ammons (2001), can be used to measure the quantity of outputs. On the other hand, outcome measures can assess an organization's ability to achieve desired levels or bring about changes in strategic resources. The outputs and outcomes feed back into the strategic resources, initiating new performance cycles (Bianchi, 2016; Bianchi, et al., 2017; Bianchi, 2021). Both end results and performance drivers are fundamental for having a clear understanding of the causal relationships. Moreover, performance drivers can be influenced in the short term, and the end results can be affected in the medium-long term. Specifically, output measures imply a shorter time horizon compared to outcomes measures which imply a broader system boundary and longer time horizon (Bianchi, 2016). The explained performance cycle is portrayed in Figure 7 below.

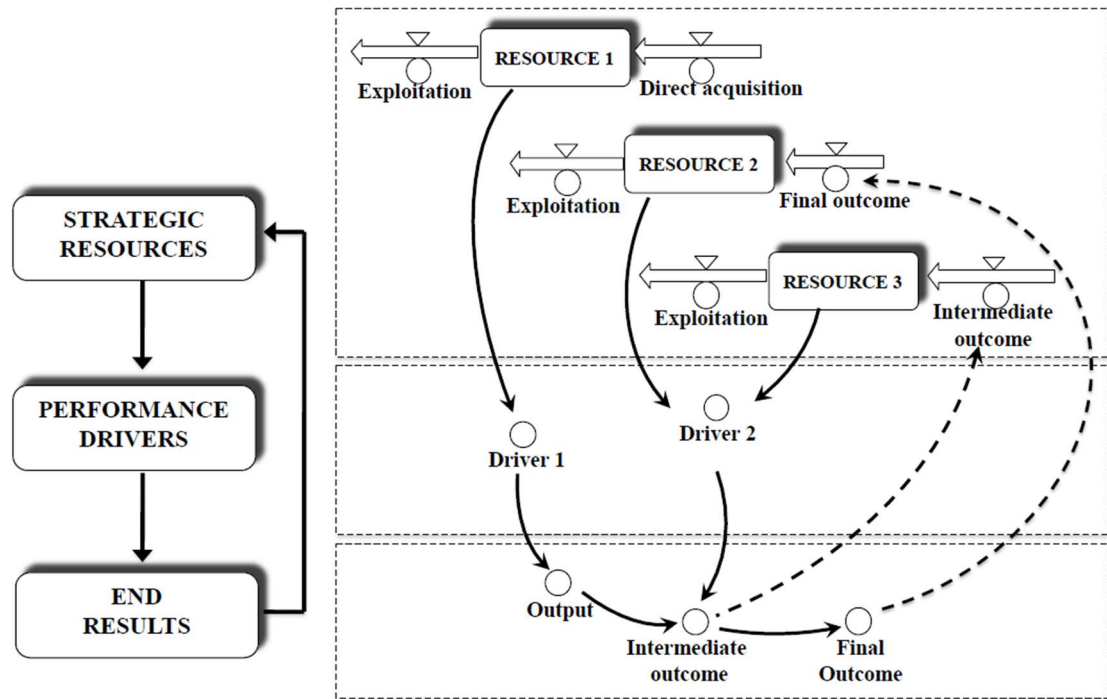


Figure 7. Dynamic Performance Management chart structure (Source: Bianchi, 2022, p.338. Adapted from Bianchi, 2016, p. 73)

DPM applies the principle of feedback and stock-and-flow concepts from System Dynamics (SD) in qualitative SD modeling to foster a dynamic view of performance management instead of the traditional static approach. Indeed, in a static view of performance management decision-makers may not frame the existing nexus between resource measures and performance measures, between the two there is a means versus ends relationship. The impossibility of capturing this nexus of strategic plans may encounter the risk to be a list of non-measurable goals disconnected from performance objectives. By adopting a DPM approach is possible to avoid this problem and at the same time to select strategic performance drivers to avoid confusion (Bianchi, 2016).

The concept of DPM emphasizes the importance of collaboration as a strategic asset for achieving better outcomes. It focuses on both the extent and the effectiveness of collaboration. These factors encompass the coordination of service delivery between different agencies and the involvement of the community in decision-making processes (Xavier & Bianchi, 2020). DPM can help stakeholders align their mental models when addressing "wicked" social problems such as social exclusion, marginalization, sustainability, and climate change.

Due to the system's feedback structure, the performance (or behavior) of dynamic and complex social systems, such as those underpinning social inclusion policies, changes over time. This nonlinear feedback structure is influenced by the system's behavior, the

conceptual models of policymakers, and decisions, including those regarding targeted outputs and results (Sterman, 1994; Bianchi, 2016; Xavier & Bianchi, 2019).

Identifying patterns of structure and behavior variations in the analyzed systems may assist decision-makers in preventing the onset of failure. Unintended policy implementation outcomes are an example of such symptoms. If viewed from a static and sectorial viewpoint, consequences may appear homogenous (Xavier & Bianchi, 2019).

By merging different fields of study that have been kept separated (i.e., performance management, governance, and system dynamics) it is possible to improve the quality and understanding of communication processes, policy design, and implementation. Moreover, by unifying these methods, terminologies, and tools it would be possible to a gradual shift towards outcome-based performance management and governance. By using the tools of SD, it is possible to frame the important tangible and intangible assets that can be used to implement policies. These strategic assets can be directly purchased from the market, while others can only develop as an outcome of implemented policies. In the DPM chart, they are modeled as stocks that are influenced through inflows and outflows (“faucets”), through which policymakers may control and affect those strategic resources that cannot be directly acquired from the market. Such flow variables are measured as a ratio between the stock of strategic resources that they are affecting and time. Moreover, strategic resources are the assets that policymakers may deploy to affect performance drivers and end results (Bianchi, 2016).

DPM framework highlights a causal perspective of policy design that can be used to shift towards quantitative modeling – which requires data, time, and SD simulation skills. Nevertheless, qualitative modeling adds substantial value because it enables a deeper and rigorous analysis and allows to portray behaviors that may not be taken into consideration because of the absence of data source of information (Wolstenholme, 1999; Bianchi, 2016; Bianchi, 2021).

The use of the DPM approach is profoundly useful to frame the main interdependent sub-systems, namely the socio-economic, political, institutional, and organizational systems (Vignieri, 2016; Omong, 2021).

### 3.5.1. A balanced view of performance

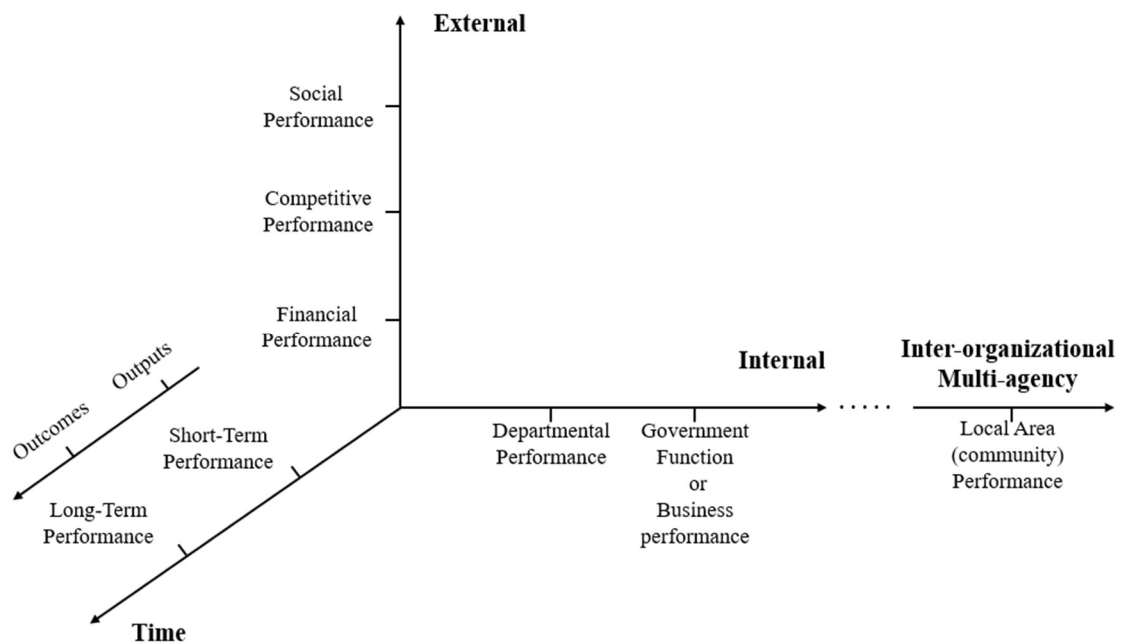


Figure 8. A balanced view of Performance (Adapted from Bianchi 2016, p. 53)

Performance sustainability can be conceptualized through various profiles using DPM. As depicted in Figure 8, the evaluation of performance can be conducted from three distinct perspectives: internal, external, and temporal. From an internal perspective, it is expected that sustainable performance will exhibit a harmonious profile that demonstrates coherence among the various subsystems, sectors, and departmental/functional domains within an organization. According to Coda (2010), it is essential to maintain consistency in the design of social and competitive dimensions of performance under the external profile, to attain financial performance. From a temporal perspective, it is necessary to evaluate and measure the sustainability of performance in a way that recognizes potential trade-offs in both the immediate and distant future. Bianchi (2016) posits that a triadic framework offers a foundation for comprehending the interdependent relationship between an agency and its context. To achieve this objective, it is possible to introduce another dimension to the DPM framework, which builds upon the existing internal dimension. This additional dimension is referred to as "inter-organizational performance". This perspective centers on the performance of a specific area, with emphasis on the aptitude of stakeholders within that region (such as a neighborhood within a city) to cooperate in the creation of shared resources that can yield public value thereby enhancing the capacity of local organizations to pursue sustainable development. The aforementioned value has the potential to impact the social, competitive, and financial performance of both the individual organizations and the local area as a whole. It suggests that policy evaluations encompass both immediate impacts,

indicated by output measures, as well as outcomes. The aforementioned findings are related to the development of intermediate and final outcomes, which result in changes to the common good via collaborative strategies. The outcome of local area attractiveness, for example, can be modified by numerous policies adopted by different stakeholders. These policies aim to improve the quality of infrastructure and services, increase the number of companies in the area, increase the employment rate, increase in citizens and visitors satisfaction, and enhance local area image. Adopting an external viewpoint on performance management by local organizations in a region, in collaboration with other stakeholders, would include incorporating different dimensions of long-term performance (Bianchi; 2021; 2022; Bianchi et al., 2019). The function of each agency would entail prioritizing, as a subsequent phase of evaluation, the degree to which they consistently support the implementation of community policies. The pursuit of such a perspective can be achieved by implementing Dynamic Performance Governance (DPG) through the application of DPM to performance governance (Bianchi et al., 2019).

### **3.6. Dynamic Performance Governance Approach**

By merging the multiple dimensions of sustainable performance, organizations in a region would adopt an “outside-in” perspective of performance management alongside other stakeholders (Bianchi et al., 2019). As a second stage of analysis, it would be the responsibility of each organization to determine how consistently they contribute to the implementation of community policies. By employing DPM in performance governance, i.e., through "Dynamic Performance Governance" (DPG), this perspective can be pursued (Bianchi et al., 2019; Bianchi, 2021; 2022). Indeed, the DPG framework builds upon the DPM approach while broadening the scope of action by involving different institutional and non-institutional actors and framing the different systems such as the socio-economic, political, institutional, and environmental ones.

The DPG framework by reversing the classical “inside-out” view of outcome-based performance management, which entails that policy design is defined through the "lenses" of each organization, focuses on an “outside-in” view, which implies that policy design focuses on local area rather than single organization (Bianchi, 2021; 2022). This enables stakeholders to outline collaborative policies that produce shared strategic resources at the societal level, thereby enhancing agency performance. Despite the apparent ease of implementation, this process is at odds with the mental models held by organizations and citizens who maintain that prioritizing community outcomes over individual goals may result in a crisis or reduced performance for their respective organizations (Bianchi &



Vignieri, 2020). More specifically, in an urban context, municipalities may design and implement policies with the primary goal of achieving efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of public services to individuals, groups, and organizations, thereby influencing the outputs and outcomes of the agency. Nevertheless, the aforementioned results have an indirect impact on societal outcomes. The urban environment embraces a multitude of stakeholders whose policies have a significant impact on the attractiveness and quality of life within the area. This is the underlying reason for needing an “outside-in” view while designing, implementing, and evaluating policies.

The ultimate goal of the illustrated perspective is to transform a given society into a cohesive community, whose goals extend beyond mere adherence to legal and regulatory frameworks. A community is characterized by the presence of an engaged and participatory citizenry. This concept encompasses a wider scope than that of juridical or legal citizenship. The concept pertains to a ubiquitous feeling of membership within a collective, as experienced by individuals within a given community (Bianchi, 2021; 2022). This sense of belonging is characterized not only by shared physical proximity, regulations, or legal responsibilities, but also by common goals, values, and cultural habits. The aforementioned condition establishes an ethical foundation for the practice of civic commitment and loyalty, as posited by Cooper and Gulick (1984) and Cooper et al. (2006). The adoption of an "outside-in" perspective in policy design should prioritize the intermediate goal of enhancing active citizenship, as it has the potential to positively impact societal well-being. Indeed, the absence of active citizenship could potentially render collaborative endeavors among public sector entities, private organizations, individuals, and groups (such as volunteers) unsustainable over an extended period of time. Ansell and Gash (2008) have noted that the participation of the private sector and civil society in policy development and implementation is crucial for achieving sustainable community outcomes. This involvement is necessary to gather and employ a diverse range of ideas, skills, experiences, capabilities, contacts, and energies that can effectively address wicked social problems, enhance the attractiveness of local areas, and improve quality of life (Bianchi, 2021). This approach focused on an “outside-in” perspective may also help in assessing sustainable performance outcomes in relation to the three above-mentioned dimensions: time horizon (short vs. long term), field (social, competitive, financial), and object (organizations vs. local area) (Bianchi, 2021; Bianchi et al. 2019; Xavier & Bianchi, 2019; Bianchi, 2021; Bianchi, 2022). In this perspective, policies aimed at reaching sustainable outcomes should both comply with the social and competitive dimensions and also reach financial equilibrium. Therefore, the DPG approach by implementing an “outside-in” perspective of policy design

and implementation may be able to frame the inherent complexity characterizing local area performance. Moreover, this approach may enhance collaborative governance regimes aimed at developing common goods and public value. The designed community development policies provide a foundation for the implementation at an organizational level by using a Dynamic Performance Management and Governance approach and an "outside-in" perspective. This necessitates that each stakeholder organization's corporate-level policies pursue organizational objectives that are congruent with the targeted community outcomes. Additionally, it calls for the consistent departmental cascading of corporate policies and the ongoing monitoring of implementation outcomes via performance indicators and emergent outputs and outcomes (Bianchi, 2021; 2022).

If a control process is being used to apply societal "wicked" problem-solving strategies, it should not be constrained by a feedback system. It should also support proactive feedforward logic (Otley, 1999, p. 369), which suggests that new issues or opportunities that arise during departmental implementation could lead to adjustments to the planned policies at the institutional and local levels (Bianchi, 2021).

The "outside-in" perspective of performance governance strengthens the capacity of outcome-based performance management to address the complex nature of deeply embedded social wicked problems (Bianchi, 2021; 2022).

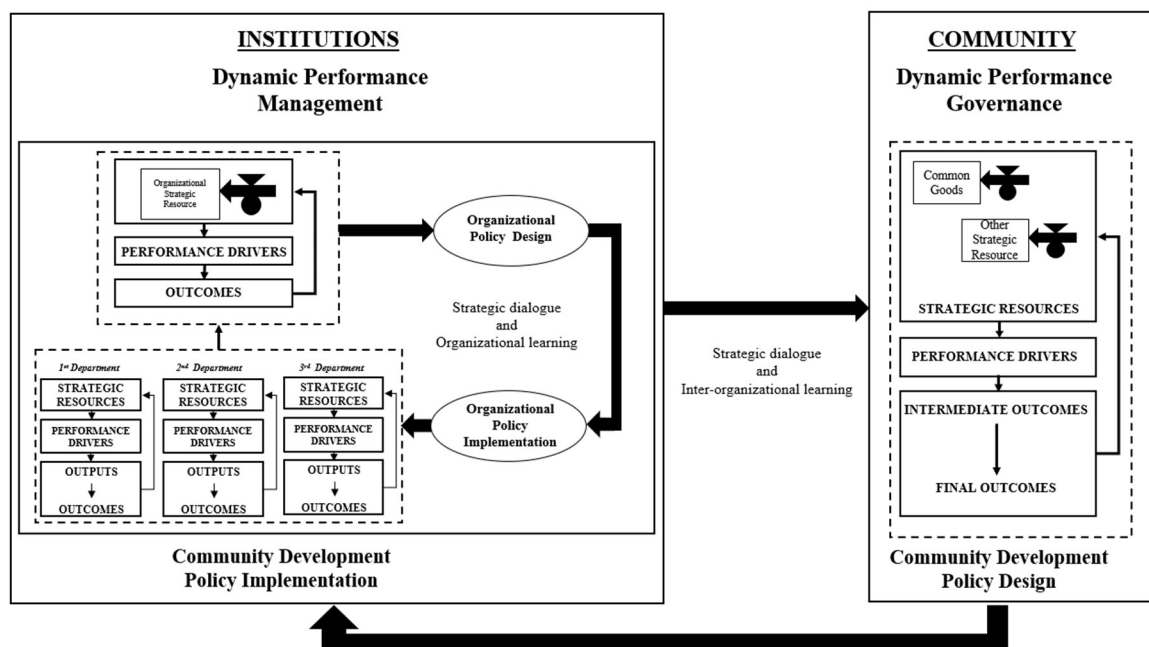


Figure 9. Supporting policy design and implementation to pursue sustainable community outcomes through Dynamic Performance Management and Governance in an "outside-in perspective" (Adapted from Bianchi, 2021, p. 342)

The chart presented in Figure 9 illustrates how the integration of DPG and DPM from the outside-in can serve as a foundation for achieving efficient and effective sustainable performance at both the organizational and societal levels.

### 3.6. Research Design

The integration of qualitative and quantitative elements in DPM & DPG framework serves to enrich the scope of field research. By incorporating qualitative methods with quantitative elements, typical in SD, the scope of research is expanded to encompass intangible variables that are typically not quantifiable. Such variables characterize the full spectrum of wicked problems. Incorporating qualitative dimensions into the analysis facilitates a greater focus on the organizational and inter-organizational aspects of the system. This also facilitates enhanced communication and comprehension of the system, thereby aiding the involved actors in designing and implementing the needed solutions (Wolstenholme, 1985). Being such information is not numerical in nature, it requires a qualitative model-building process (Luna-Reyes & Andersen, 2004). Indeed, as stated by Forrester (1992: 56):

“As suggested by the figure, the amount of available information declines, probably by many orders of magnitude, in going from mental to written information and again by another similar large factor in going from written to numerical information. Furthermore, the character of information content changes as one moves from mental to written to numerical information. In moving down the diagram, there is a progressively smaller proportion of information about structure and policies.”

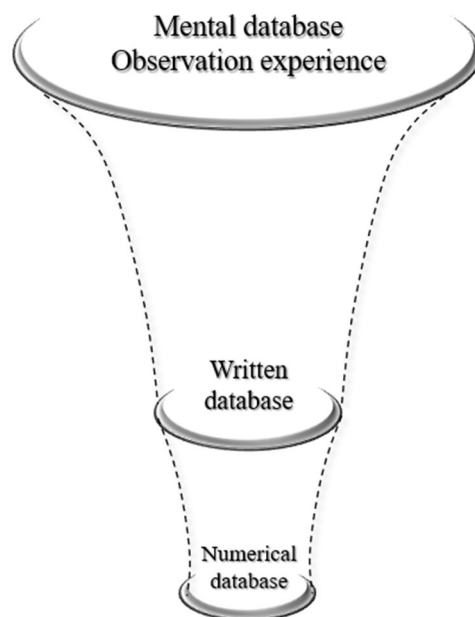


Figure 10. From mental database to numerical database (Adapted from Forrester, 1992: 56)

By adopting a qualitative approach, it is possible to focus on events, people's experiences, and perceptions that could not be otherwise captured. The qualitative approach entailed employing semi-structured and unstructured interviews so as to frame socio-economic and cultural phenomena systematically and comprehensively and to provide an in-depth understanding of the interviewees (Teherani et al., 2015; Rich & Ginsburg, 1999; Omong, 2021).

### **3.7. Instruments Validity and Reliability**

The validity of the instruments was evaluated through various methods, including the examination of reports, literature reviews, consultations with the research tutor and co-tutors, and engagement with key practitioners (Taherdoost, 2016; Omong, 2021: 74). A pilot study was conducted to evaluate the validity of the instruments. The purpose of the pilot study was to assess the appropriateness of the questionnaire by examining factors such as the length of the questions, the language used, and the feedback received from the interviewees. It involved carrying out interviews among non-sampled participants in Palermo and Baltimore to establish if questions were properly framing the investigated problem and if they were interpreted by respondents as planned (Hilton, 2017). Moreover, this pilot study was also important to assess the average length needed by respondents to finish the interview. The pilot study played a crucial role in the development of the final questionnaire and interview guide used during the research. It was conducted with the underlying assumption that all participants provided truthful responses. This work was done to ensure the level of accuracy of the phenomenon investigated and the related variables entailed in the phenomenon (Taherdoost, 2016; Omong, 2021: 74). The pilot study was also useful to ensure that questions verify that the questionnaire items accurately assessed the desired constructs within the specified context, while also serving as indicators for other constructs. Furthermore, the final interview guide was formulated in ways that would allow its applicability across various contexts, thereby facilitating the production of comparable results (Bastos et al., 2014). In this perspective, reliability was a crucial aspect of the data collection process as it guaranteed the maintenance of consistency throughout the study (Zohrabi, 2013; Taherdoost, 2016; Omong, 2021: 74).

### **3.8. Source of Data, Data Collection Methods, Procedure and Management and Ethics**

#### **3.8.1. Source of data**

The research relied on primary data obtained from key informants, as well as secondary data sourced from various publications, reports, official websites, and institutions. One of the biggest challenges related to the use of secondary sources of data is the absence of up-to-date information (Omong, 2021: 75). However, this limitation was addressed by incorporating primary sources of data, which provide current and relevant information for the research. A limitation related to the use of primary data is its inability to enable comparisons across national and international contexts. However, to overcome this constraint, secondary data was utilized in such situations (Omong, 2021: 75). As a result, the integration of primary and secondary data proved to be a viable solution for addressing such problems (Saunders et al., 2012).

#### **3.8.2. Data Collection Method, Procedure and Management**

The primary data were collected from a diverse range of sources, including key informants from social enterprises, non-governmental organizations, non-profit organizations, business owners, community-based organizations, residents, university academics/professors, and city planners. The questions in the key informant interview guide were formulated in consideration of the particular objectives of the study as outlined. The secondary data utilized in this study was obtained from a variety of sources, including published materials, institutional databases, reports, and websites. It employed a cross-sectional survey methodology, chosen for its suitability in investigating urban processes due to the limitations imposed by time constraints (Saunders et al., 2012; Omong, 2021: 75).

The first step of the analysis process involved transcribing the interviews from the recorded audio files. The second phase entailed the procedure to ensure the anonymity of all participants, which included removing all the identifiable information provided by the participants. This was done so to ensure the confidentiality of the information provided by participants, especially when some topics were particularly sensitive. The significance of this matter lies in the potential consequences that may arise from a breach of confidentiality, as it can potentially expose a participant to adverse circumstances. The distortion of trust in the researcher-participant relationship can result from this phenomenon (Turcotte-Tremblay & Mc Sween-Cadieux, 2018; Omong, 2021). Subsequently, the process involved the examination and classification of textual data into distinct themes that were linked to the research objectives. The subsequent phase entailed the application of content and thematic

analysis to code the initial data (Omong, 2021). The initial coding proved to be beneficial for both the categorization and utilization of the data. Furthermore, the research process encompassed the examination of the gathered data in conjunction with supplementary secondary data, the identification of any discrepancies or missing information, and the establishment of parallels with analogous scenarios exhibiting comparable trends (Omong, 2021: 75). The data was utilized in the formulation of the DPG charts and CLDs regarding the two neighborhoods.

During the interview process, each respondent was guaranteed anonymity and assured that any information that they provided to the researcher would be treated in confidence. Moreover, being participation in the research voluntary respondents were informed both in writing and verbally, that there was no obligation to be involved in the study.

A comprehensive set of key informants representing diverse stakeholder groups were interviewed. The interview process involved the use of audio recordings, which were obtained with the explicit consent of the interviewees. Moreover, the researcher took measures to ensure that ethical duties, obligations, and responsibilities towards participants were upheld during the course of the research (Turcotte-Tremblay & Mc Sween-Cadieux, 2018: 6; Omong, 2021).

### **3.8.3. Research Ethics**

The implementation of research ethics principles aims to safeguard fairness, dignity, and mutual respect for participants throughout the entire process of data collection and beyond (Ryen, 2004). Throughout every stage of this investigation, no personal inquiries were conducted, as all questions posed in the interview guide were directly aligned with the research goals (Omong, 2021: 76-77). Furthermore, such goals were clearly explained to the participants at the beginning of the interview so to guarantee their awareness of the research's goals. The participants were adequately informed about their right to refuse participation or withdraw from the study if they felt unwilling to continue at any stage. The establishment of a positive and respectful relationship was of great importance as it demonstrated the fundamental ethical considerations involved in engaging with participants. During the data collection phase, a flexible approach was employed, which involved relocating to a suitable venue that guaranteed both confidentiality and privacy. The researcher demonstrated a keen interest in identifying any indications of participant hesitancy to participate, such as physical withdrawal, disregard, and silence, among other behaviors, to prevent instances of coercive interviewing (Omong, 2021: 76-77). In conclusion, the aforementioned research design was deemed appropriate for this study as it facilitated the acquisition of data on all the research

questions. The data obtained through interviews, publications, reports, and various institutions offered insights into the phenomenon of social exclusion experienced in the two neighborhoods. The data further supported the basic premise upon which robust conclusions were derived (Omong, 2021: 76-77).

### **3.9. Sampling Technique, Size, and Selection**

The research has focused on the interchange of knowledge, expertise, experiences, and skills from various backgrounds, i.e., SD, public management, governance, urban planning, sociology, and psychology. By merging different domains, it is possible to better capture the inherent complexity of the analyzed phenomenon. To better capture the different perspectives of the investigated problem different stakeholders were interviewed. The sampling frame is the source or sources that include the eligible population or groupings (Czaja & Bair, 2005). This frame corresponds to the examined population. In other words, the population of interest consists of stakeholders of the local areas and neighborhoods being analyzed. Therefore, the sampling frame would comprise key stakeholders from the areas of Baltimore City and Palermo, based on their contribution toward the neighborhoods and their personal experience of the areas. The presence of a diverse target population offers the most beneficial conditions for investigating possible discrepancies in responses, perceptions, and behaviors. The presence of diversity is essential for accurately assessing the nature of the area. Furthermore, the significance of the responses obtained from the semi-structured interviews is twofold. Firstly, they are instrumental in evaluating the stakeholders' perspectives on wicked problems. Secondly, they contribute to addressing the research questions employing a comparative analysis with existing literature in the respective domain (Omong, 2021).

The target population refers to the group or set of elements under investigation, to whom the findings of the study will be extrapolated. Examining the perspectives of individuals would yield benefits as it would allow to generate insightful conclusions regarding the research questions. Perceptions of the issues may exhibit differences based on factors such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, level of education, and residential area. In this view, sampling was carried out according to the non-probability methods including purposive and snowball samplings (Vehovar et al., 2016). The purposive samples were selected using a subjective approach so to focus on specific aspects. The primary differentiating factor among participants was the roles they had within the organizations they were involved in. These roles granted them a greater level of expertise and allowed them to give comprehensive responses. Snowball sampling was employed as a sampling method due to

the limited size of the population and the challenges associated with accessing certain key respondents. The snowball sampling technique was employed by first identifying a key respondent from the desired population units to be interviewed. Subsequently, the designated initial respondent would provide recommendations or identify additional main respondents who met the study's criteria until the desired sample size was attained (Omong, 2021).



## SAN FILIPPO NERI NEIGHBORHOOD CASE STUDY

**4.1. Background: Palermo Municipality**

Palermo, the capital of the autonomous region of Sicily (Italy), is located in the northwest of the island overlooking the Tyrrhenian Sea. The municipality of Palermo is geographically subdivided into eight circumscriptions (Figure 11), encompassing a total area of 160.59 square kilometers. Based on data provided by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT, 2023), the total population of the metropolitan area in question was estimated to be around 1,208,991 individuals in the year 2021, of which 630,828 individuals only in the Palermo Municipality<sup>2</sup>.

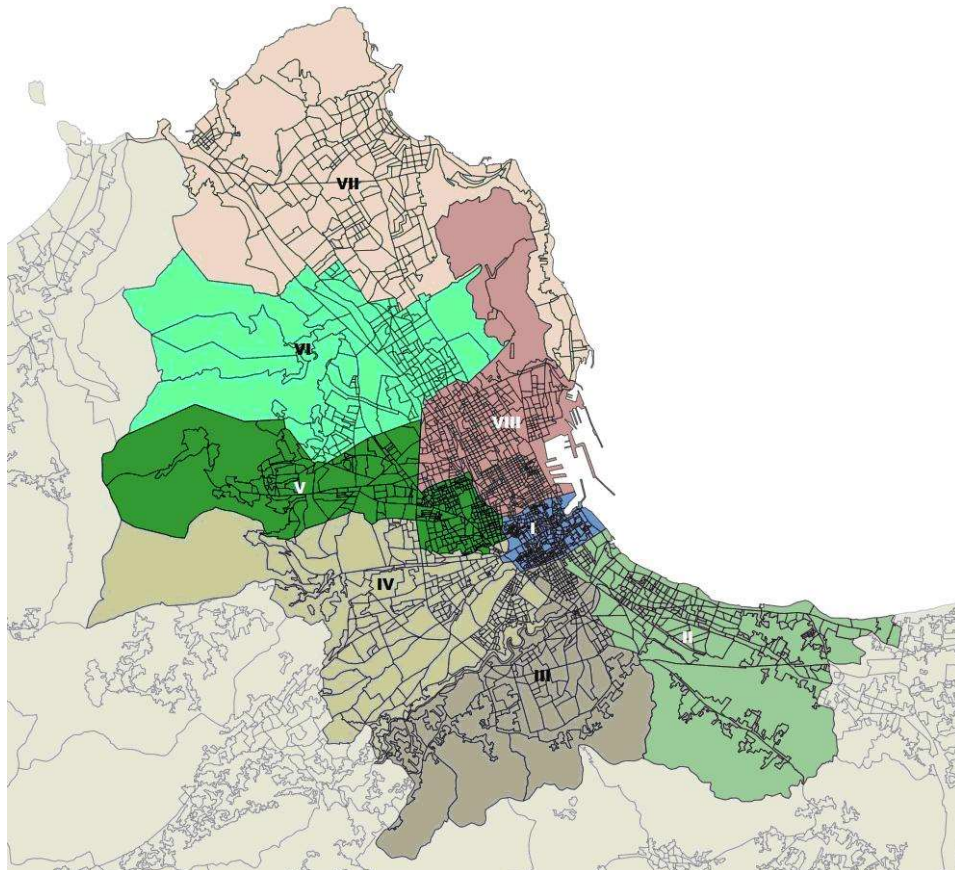


Figure 11. Palermo municipality: the eight circumscriptions (Source: Comune di Palermo, Retrieved from: <https://www.comune.palermo.it/bilancio-sociale.php?anno=2019&indice=2>)

The first circumscription includes the historical center of the city of Palermo. It underwent significant development in the sixteenth century, under Spanish domination, and was built as a fortified town enclosed by walls. The street layout, characterized by a complex, intricate, and labyrinth network of streets, remained largely unchanged from the previous Islamic

<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.comune.palermo.it/palermo-informa-dettaglio.php?id=34201&tipo=1>

domination. The borders of the city's historical center are demarcated by the streets of Cavour to the northwest, and Lincoln and Tuköry to the southeast. These streets follow a nearly parallel trajectory to the ancient fortifications of the city. The entirety of the region, characterized by a medieval arrangement featuring a collection of asymmetrical and narrow streets, is intersected by two perpendicular axes, ending in Piazza Vigliena, commonly referred to as the "Quattro Canti". The formation of these ideal axes is given to the streets Vittorio Emanuele, historically referred to as "Cassaro" and Maqueda. The city was divided into four districts, namely Capo or Monte di Pietà, Loggia or Castellamare, Kalsa or Tribunale, and Albergheria or Palazzo Reale, by the intersection of two streets, which created a symbolic cross. The contemporary urban center emerged close to its ancient core, with expansion occurring primarily towards the northwest, specifically in the region adjacent to Monte Pellegrino, where the harbor is situated.

During the 1950s, Palermo underwent a significant urban transformation, primarily driven by the post-war reconstruction efforts<sup>3</sup>. This process continued until the 1980s<sup>4</sup>, as the city faced the pressing need to address various urgent issues such as the increase in housing demand due to significant internal immigration and relocation as well as the shift away from the historical center due to delayed implementation of residential redevelopment plans (Quartarone & Triolo, 2007). The expansion of the urban area of Palermo has developed through the traditional process of acquiring low-cost agricultural areas, located at a certain distance from urbanized areas. This has contributed to the typical effects of urban suburbs (high public costs to support primary and secondary urbanization, poor accessibility, social ghettoization, etc.), and it has created a significant incentive for land rent in the undeveloped areas positioned between the areas with affordable and social housing and the city's central business districts. The local administration provided these places with the basic infrastructure needed to serve the "distant" suburbs, and they quickly turned into a source of revenue for the mafia-run construction and real estate companies. These have increased their grip over the area by directly interfering in the acquisition and administration of these lands. Other suburbs have thus been developed between the districts of affordable and social

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<sup>3</sup> The Reconstruction Plan, formulated by the Technical Office of the City, received official approval in 1947. Its primary objective was to address the housing demands of individuals displaced as a result of the extensive destruction caused by the bombings during World War II. The allocation of resources was intended for the development of 150,000 rooms, with the majority (125,000) designated for the redevelopment of rooms that were destroyed due to bombing or demolition as a result of reported damage. The remaining portion was allocated to address the need for reduced housing densities and to accommodate the projected increase in population (Trombino, 2000 in Quartarone & Triolo, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> During the mid-1960s, the Economic and Social Housing Plan was formulated, receiving approval in 1966. This plan was implemented through the creation of 14 Area plans, which specifically addressed agricultural areas situated at the farthest borders of the expansion lines outlined in Program 62.

housing and the more central areas: those of Palermo's middle and upper class; seeking shopping malls and sporting facilities) that have no connection to the aforementioned districts or to the historic villages to which they were "leaning;" and those of high-density apartment buildings. The conventional center/periphery distinction in this unequal growth process is given more than only by the physical distance from a center by a much deeper social gap, which creates the marginality of urban sections to support the economic growth of others. Those areas are characterized by difficulty in accessibility (lack of public transportation, high costs, or lengthy travel times), a lack of services, and a feeling that "temporary accumulation of objects waiting for the right location" (what we can collectively refer to as "urban incompleteness"), and, finally, the presence or persistence of functions that are incompatible with habitation (harmful activities, pollution, or special facilities) contribute to creating that sense of separation between such neighborhoods. To emphasize the deviations, fence off, isolate, and maintain the deterioration in these areas is necessary for the illegal operations that feed the criminal underworld system that controls territories.

Social housing residential areas like Zen 2 and Borgo Nuovo, as well as various areas around the Oreto River, serve as a lucrative pool of "labor" for organized crime dealing, extortion, and money laundering (Quartarone & Triolo, 2007).

#### **4.2. San Filippo Neri neighborhood**

The San Filippo Neri neighborhood encompasses three residential areas, namely Borgo Pallavicino, Zen 1, and Zen 2, which were constructed between 1956 and the late 1980s. These settlements were developed to cater to both economic and social housing needs. In response to the earthquake of 1968 and the subsequent displacement of Palermo's historic center, a decision was made to construct numerous "social housing" complexes throughout the city (Scelsi, 2020; Fava 2008; Alaimo, 2012).

The San Filippo Neri neighborhood is located at the northernmost perimeter of the city of Palermo. When observing the area from the top of Monte Pellegrino, one can easily discern its distinct shape. Particularly notable is the tightly woven urban fabric of the Zen 2 "insulae," which is visually separated from the surrounding historic villages, abandoned agricultural plots, and a collection of structures that lack any deliberate effort to establish connections with the community of the neighborhood (Scelsi, 2020; Fava, 2008; Alaimo, 2012).

Figure 12 portrays the aspect of the insulae shape characterizing the Zen 2 buildings and Figure 13 shows the panoramic view of the area.

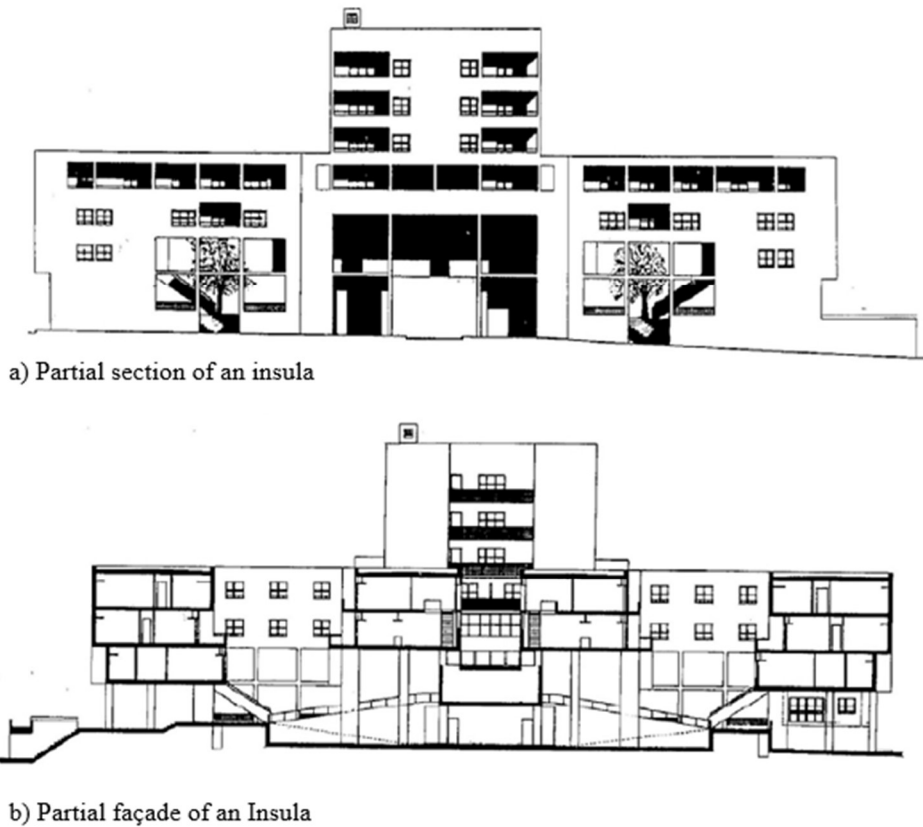


Figure 12. Insulae building shape characterizing Zen 2.  
 (Retrieved from: [https://periferievelate.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/palermo\\_gregotti\\_low.pdf](https://periferievelate.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/palermo_gregotti_low.pdf))



Figure 13. Panoramic view of the insulae in Zen 2 (Retrieved from: <https://www.guidasicilia.it/notizia/sapevate-che-lo-zen-di-palermo-fu-progettato-da-uno-dei-padri-della-moderna-architettura-italiana/3010956>)

The development of the San Filippo Neri neighborhood can be divided into three distinct phases. The initial phase, known as "Borgo Pallavicino," (highlighted in blue) was designed to expand the existing village of Pallavicino. Subsequently, the Zen 1 (highlighted in yellow) and Zen 2 (highlighted in red) sections were built.





Figure 14. San Filippo Neri neighborhood. Highlighted in blue Borgo Pallavicino, in yellow Zen 1, and in red Zen 2 (Map retrieved from <https://palermohub.opendatasicilia.it/index.html> modified by the author)

The construction of the 316 housing units in Borgo Pallavicino commenced based on legislative decree 33/56. These housing units had remained unoccupied for approximately ten years and were illegally occupied in 1968. In 1966 it was approved the economic and social housing plan aimed to accommodate around 20,000 residents in area n.12, specifically in the Patti location. The implementation of Zen 1, a project devised by engineers Biondo and Inzerillo, began but only the eastern area was completed.

During the intervening years, a new urban vision had developed. The Zone Plans implemented through the PEEP (“*Piani di Edilizia Economica Popolare*” which stems from Economic and Social Housing Plans) required the inclusion of civic centers and commercial, associative, and religious routes. These plans also aimed to differentiate between various types of housing and establish separate paths for vehicles and pedestrians (Sciascia, 2003). Zen 1 consists of buildings organized in blocks of six, eight, and ten floors. These buildings are arranged linearly around a central area, originally intended for collective services and the construction of a civic center, although the latter was not realized. There exists an open

backyard in this area with trees enclosed by a fence. Within this green space, there is a designated area for the elderly to engage in the recreational activity of bowling. After the earthquake, the municipality will seize the newly constructed houses to provide shelter for the homeless population residing in the historic center, who will subsequently remain in these accommodations. Since the 1970s, the majority of houses have been illegally occupied and remained inaccessible due to the lack of primary infrastructure such as water supply, sewerage, electricity, and roads (Scelsi, 2020; Giampino, et al., 2016).

Zen 1 exhibits morphological and typological diversity, with commercial activities concentrated along the main axis. It also ensures the right to housing and maintains adequate levels of livability.

In the 1970s, a tender process was launched for the completion of Zen. The construction of Zen 2, based on the winning project by the group consisting of Amoroso, Gregotti, Purini, Bisogni, and Matsui, commenced and continued until the 1980s. Throughout this period, numerous deviations from the original plan were made, significantly impacting the overall urban plan (Ristretta & Russo, 2006).

The winning design of the 1970 competition for the completion of Zen originally consisted of residences and collective facilities that were organized in three parallel strips. Sports facilities and a school were situated in the northernmost area. The central strip accommodated the infrastructure of the Center for Collective Services, which comprised a hotel, a church, libraries, both public and private offices, parking facilities, and a supermarket. The third strip, which completes the settlement towards the south, was designated for productive purposes, specifically for artisan workshops spanning an area of approximately 16,000 square meters. Childcare facilities were originally incorporated into the housing units comprising the neighborhood, referred to as *insulae*. The structures were constructed; however, in a limited number of cases, they were not utilized for their originally intended purpose. At present, there exists a sole kindergarten catering to children aged 3-6 years in the neighborhood. This kindergarten is known as the comprehensive institute L. Sciascia and is situated in Zen1. Additionally, the only nursery in the area, the municipal nursery La Coccinella, is also located there (Scelsi, 2020).

In the area a considerable number of families face financial constraints that prevent them from accessing private childcare services or hiring babysitters. Consequently, many women in this community are compelled to forgo employment opportunities and instead choose to stay at home in order to personally attend to the needs of their children.

The lack of implementation of these essential services has exacerbated the neighborhood's segregation and marginalization, thereby intensifying the perceived divide between the neighborhood and the city. The lack of a sufficient public transportation system exacerbates the divide between these two distinct realities and poses challenges for residents in terms of mobility within the neighborhood. Zen is served by only one bus line. In order to reach the city via bus, it is necessary to make two transfers, which collectively take approximately 40 minutes. In this perspective, commuting to work or school presents considerable challenges (Scelsi, 2020).

As remarked by Fava (2008: 69) the neighborhood is isolated from the rest of the city since it is surrounded by agricultural spaces. The San Filippo Neri neighborhood has become connected to the presence of wide roadways that span several hundred meters in width and length. These roads seemingly appear out of nowhere and lead to destinations that lack a discernible purpose or endpoint. The roads in question adhere to the prescribed design outlined in the urban development plan of the 1960s; however, they are fundamentally unsuitable for efficient transportation. In order for them to operate effectively, it would be necessary to dismantle houses, gardens, centuries-old trees, and human settlements. When viewed from a helicopter, these metaphysical stretches of roads can be perceived as segments of a vast enclosure, resembling an obstacle or border that serves to further separate Zen from the surrounding urban area. Moreover, the implementation of the high-speed ring road around the neighborhood in the 1990s resulted in an elevated level of segregation in Zen, effectively impeding any form of crossing that is not purposefully intended. The current four-lane road appears to be excessively large in relation to the numbers of vehicles that use it, thereby acting as a tangible obstacle to the neighborhood's connectivity (Fava, 2008; Scelsi, 2020). The combination of these changes has resulted in several effects. Firstly, it has improved the accessibility to and from Punta Raisi Airport, allowing for smoother transportation connections. Additionally, it has transformed previously unusable and undervalued land into desirable and expensive areas that are now suitable for construction. Nevertheless, concurrently, they have disrupted the inherent linkages that once united the peripheric areas with one another and with the surrounding agricultural territories. The fabric, which once carried subtle remnants of the provincial road linking Palermo and Trapani, has undergone significant transformations, resulting in a profound alteration of its initial connections. The development of infrastructure, combined with the expansion of urban areas, has resulted in the fragmentation of the landscape into a series of rectangular shapes that are tightly connected and uniformly distributed in a north-south orientation. The

construction of roads and enclosures has resulted in a series of fractures, with the most prominent one occurring in the vicinity of the ZEN area (Fava, 2008; Scelsi, 2020).

In Zen 2, everyday life is characterized by a sense of enclosure inside the insulae, with pedestrian streets serving as subtle boundaries between personal and shared spaces. The shops are integrated into the foundations of houses, resembling caves, and there are unresolved and desolate areas. The urban plan in this area is characterized by a grid of perpendicular roads that were originally designed to connect activities and services located at the outer edges of residential blocks, but never completed. The current layout lacks destination-oriented roads and lacks clear purposes for transportation. Additionally, the enclosing fence creates an anomalous character and a sense of "diversity" that is reflected in the architecture and experienced by the residents (Quartarone & Triolo, 2007).

The history of this neighborhood is characterized by squatting, along with institutional negligence, crime, and persistent stigmatization by the mass media, has resulted in a significant divide between the local community and the larger urban environment. This divide is characterized by feelings of fear and mistrust. The degrees of exclusion manifest themselves in different magnitudes. This can be observed in various contexts, such as a neighborhood that isolates itself from the larger city, a section within the neighborhood that turns its back on the rest, a pavilion that constructs gates to create a barrier, and a family that confines itself within the walls of their home (Scelsi, 2020).

The closure of this establishment can be attributed to several factors, namely social problems, a negative image held by individuals from outside the neighborhood, and the absence of adequate spaces for communal interaction and public gatherings. In the context of this game involving Russian dolls, it is observed that relationships undergo compromise, leading certain social workers to aptly employ the term "zenioska," drawing inspiration from the concept of matryoshka dolls (Scelsi, 2020).

To overcome such problems crucial steps are being made by several non-profit organizations such as Laboratorio Zen Insieme. The goals of their projects are to reduce the physical and social gaps between the Zen1 and Zen2 neighborhoods by implementing new community services. This will be achieved through the incorporation of urban green spaces and the establishment of public areas that foster social interaction and promote a sense of community. Additionally, the project aims to revitalize neglected and undeveloped locations within the neighborhoods (Scelsi, 2020).



#### 4.2.1. 1960: The sack of Palermo

As previously mentioned, the development of Zen was initiated in conjunction with other public residential buildings, in response to a substantial housing demand in Palermo. The consequences of the earthquake resulted in a significant number of individuals residing in destitute circumstances. Originally, Zen 1 was intended to cater to this particular requirement, while Zen 2 was subsequently introduced during the height of real estate speculation amidst the Sack of Palermo (*Sacco di Palermo* in Italian) and the tenure of Mayor Ciancimino. Initially intended for agricultural purposes, these lands eventually became viable for development. The neighborhood came into existence due to these morally compromised circumstances.

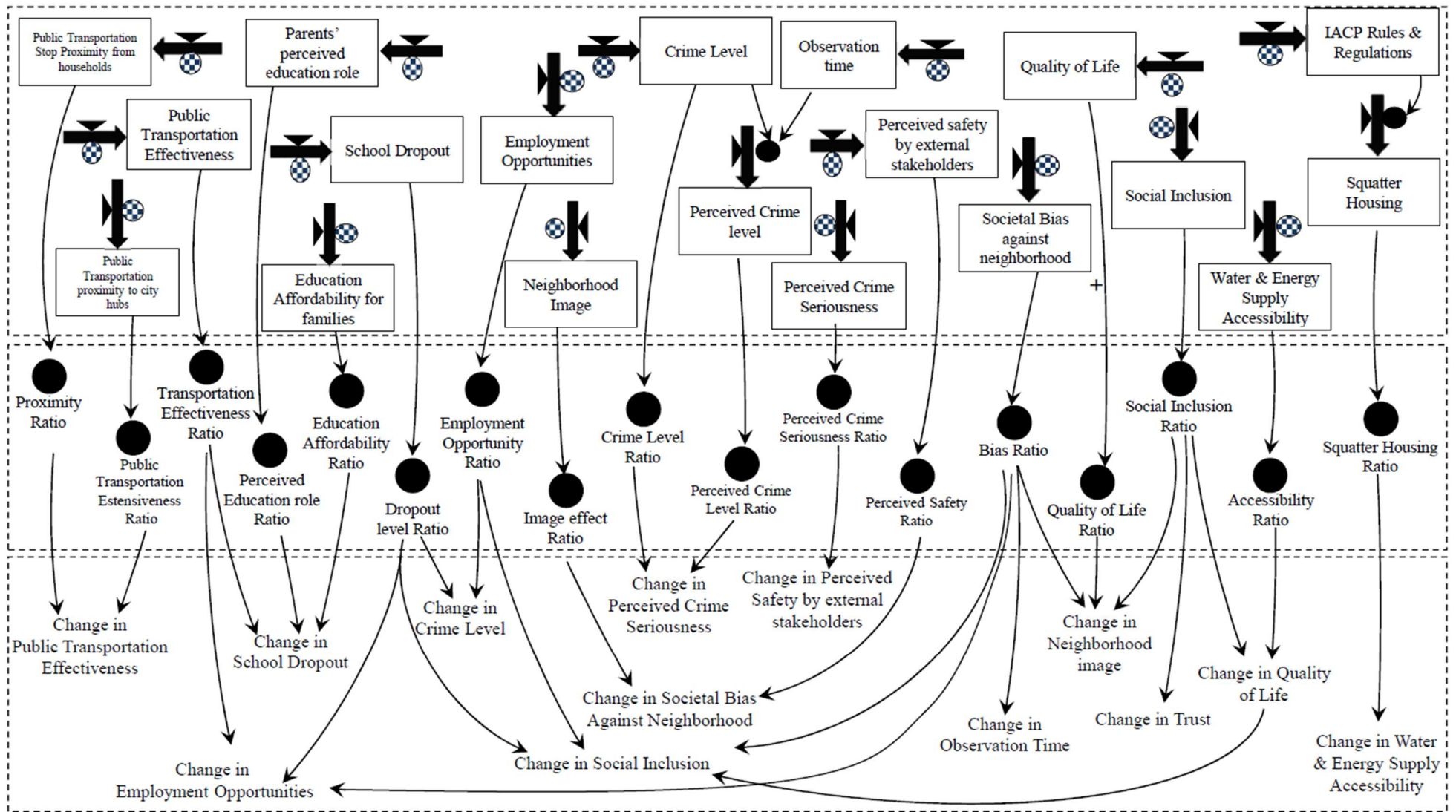
The expression "Il Sacco di Palermo" is frequently employed to denote the period of rapid urban development that occurred in the city from the late 1950s to the early 1960s (Dino, 2005; Pedone, 2019; Scalia, 2021; Scelsi, 2020). The economic expansion was a consequence of a collusion between organized crime and politicians, which ultimately caused a significant transformation in the city's architectural landscape. The transformation had a detrimental impact on the green spaces, particularly the Art Nouveau villas that are characteristic of Palermo. Subsequent investigations conducted in the years that followed have substantiated the fact that the Mafia effectively leveraged its political affiliations within the municipal administration, specifically through influential individuals such as Salvo Lima and Vito Ciancimino. This strategic maneuvering enabled the Mafia to secure building permits and orchestrate a colossal real estate speculation, which stands as one of the most significant occurrences in the annals of Italian history (Dino, 2005; Pedone, 2019; Scalia, 2021; Scelsi, 2020). Under the leadership of Lima and Ciancimino, the urban development plan of the city appeared to make significant strides, as evidenced by the municipal council's endorsement of two interim versions in 1956 and 1959. Nevertheless, these versions underwent numerous amendments, incorporating the requests of various individuals, including private citizens who were, in fact, politicians, members of *Cosa Nostra*, as well as their relatives and associates. Lima and Ciancimino, utilizing their construction expertise, established a system of corruption that exerted significant influence over the construction industry in the city. This system involved the issuance of a large number of building permits, often facilitated by intermediaries, prior to the completion of the final plan. The expansion was motivated by a combination of public and private interests, which recognized the potential for profitability in urbanizing agricultural areas (Dino, 2005; Pedone, 2019; Scalia, 2021; Scelsi, 2020).

### **4.3. A Dynamic Performance Governance Analysis of Social Exclusion in San Filippo Neri Neighborhood**

In the design and implementation of a sustainable policy for San Filippo Neri neighborhood regeneration and enhancing social inclusion, performance governance should focus on outcome measures such as the residents' quality of life, active citizenship, and neighborhood image. The final outcome identified in this research is the change in social inclusion as it synthesizes the impact of joint initiative policies made through collaboration. To attain this final outcome a crucial role is played by the change in quality of life, namely an intermediate outcome, the neighborhood image, as well as the change in dominant culture and values.

The Dynamic Performance Governance chart maps the actual reality in the San Filippo Neri neighborhood based on the interviews and the second sources of information collected and analyzed and it provides a synthetic and aggregate view of the effects on performance generated by policies aimed to affect tackling the problem at hand.

Due to the wicked nature of the social exclusion and marginalization problems, this DPG chart incorporates aggregate measures to illustrate the interconnections among various stakeholders within the community. Additionally, it aims to depict the overall causal relationships among factors influencing organizational performance over a period of time. While the analysis of local government is a well-established area of research, the exploration of local area governance is a relatively recent topic. This particular field necessitates an emphasis on the multi-organizational domain, where the implementation of performance measurement and management practices is anticipated to facilitate coordination and collaboration toward a specific objective. Specifically, this objective pertains to enhancing the overall quality of life within the given area.



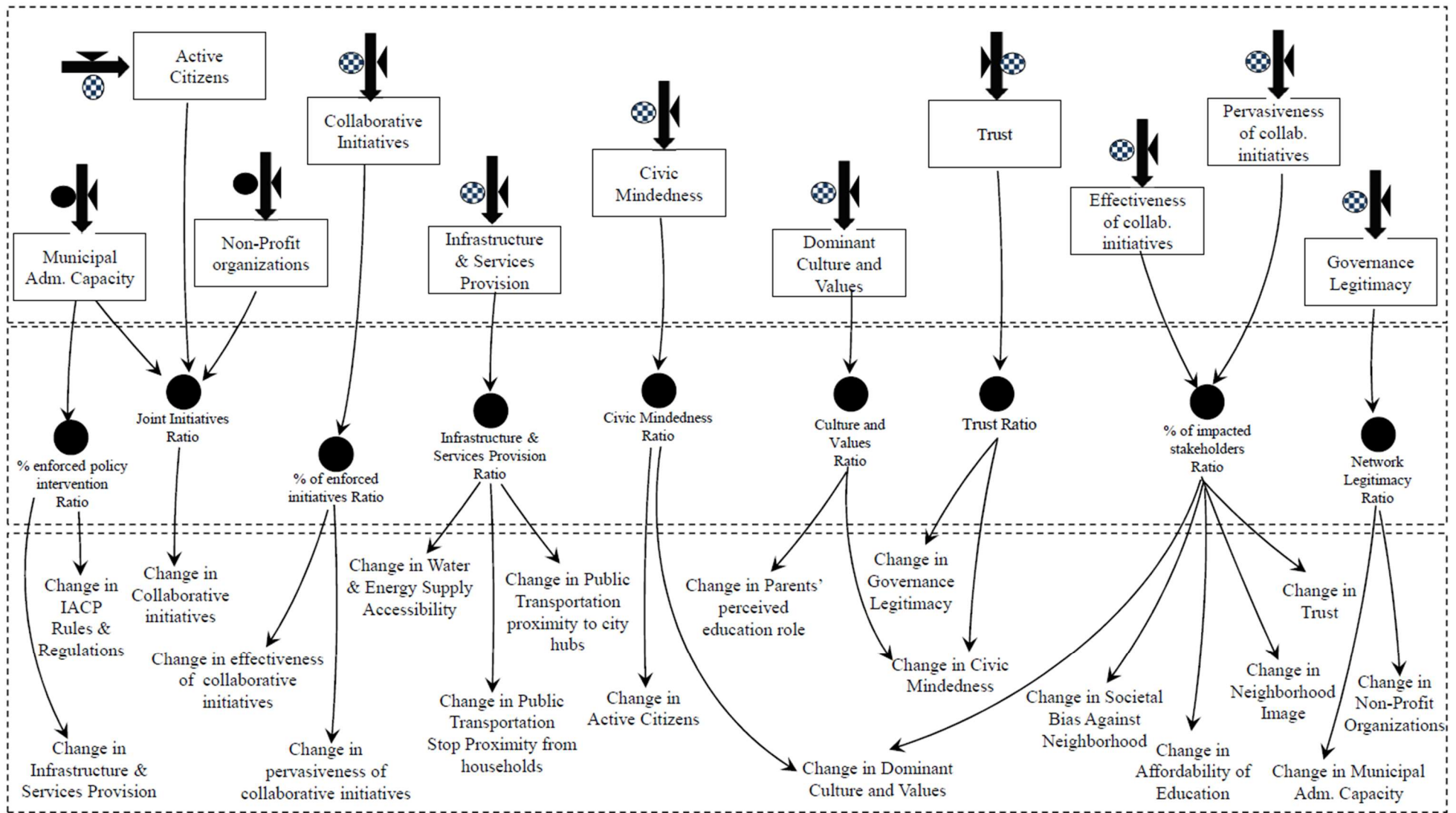


Figure 15 (A & B). A Dynamic Performance Governance Chart of the San Filippo Neri neighborhood (Source: Created by the researcher using Microsoft® PowerPoint Slide Presentation Software)

Dynamic Performance Governance (DPG) is a framework that may support stakeholders in making improved decisions, planning, policy design, and implementation while addressing social exclusion and marginalization. Figure 15 (a&b) portrays the DPG chart that highlights the main factors leading to social exclusion in the investigated neighborhood and how collaborative governance may contribute to dealing with such problems and in the long run fostering a holistic transition towards resilience.

The symbol of the chessboard represents various outcomes that have a direct impact on strategic resources that are shared among multiple parties. Such resource has a direct influence on a performance driver, which subsequently has an impact on the final outcome within the specified system under investigation (Bianchi, 2016: 93). In order to effectively manage strategic resources that are shared among various organizations, it is necessary to employ a methodology that can identify the key factors that drive performance and directly influence the flow of these resources. In addition, the DPG chart facilitates the assessment of performance indicators by comparing them to a benchmark or fixed goal value. Therefore, these indicators are relevant for the purpose of performance management (Bianchi, 2016). The figure depicted in the DPG chart illustrates the outcomes, drivers of performance, and strategic resources that are collectively used to establish a framework for the potential contribution of collaborative governance in promoting social inclusion. This is achieved through a pervasive and effective collaboration that addresses the various factors influencing the problem at hand.

By adopting an “outside-in” view, Figure 15 frames different levels of related outcomes as an effect of collaborative policies aimed at affecting community outcomes in an “active citizenship” governance mode that leads to a final outcome which is the change in social inclusion. This performance measure could be considered as a final outcome since it synthesizes the impact of collaborative policies on the living conditions of the actors involved in the neighborhood.

The factors leading to an increase or decrease in social exclusion are related to the education sphere, employment opportunities, crime level, and societal bias external stakeholders have against the neighborhood and the residents’ quality of life.

As depicted in the DPG chart, the performance driver labeled 'School Dropout Ratio' represents the proportion of students who exit the educational system without attaining a minimum qualification (typically compulsory schooling and sometimes secondary higher education) in relation to the overall student population in the area in question. This factor

serves as a key factor in addressing problems related to social exclusion. Undoubtedly, leaving the educational system earlier can significantly heighten the likelihood of individuals experiencing social exclusion, hindering their prospects of securing employment in the future. Consequently, this might augment the probability of their involvement in the justice system due to engaging in criminal activities.

The main drivers that affect the 'Change in School Dropout' are the 'Perceived Education Role Ratio', 'Education Affordability Ratio', and 'Public Transportation Effectiveness Ratio'. Such performance measures imply that parental role and public transportation are crucial factors driving the school dropout level.

The 1<sup>st</sup> driver portrays the parents' perceived role that education may have on their children. The higher the role attributed to the education system in children's life the higher the chance that parents will encourage them to continue their studies. The attribution of a given value to the education system is based on the parents' culture and values. Indeed, research has indicated that there exists a significant correlation between parental background as well as parental ambitions for their children's educational achievements and several aspects of their schooling. These aspects include the establishment of academic goals, perseverance in schooling, enrollment in courses, intellectual successes, and the likelihood of attending college (Spera et al., 2009).

The 2<sup>nd</sup> driver is gauged by the strategic resource 'Education Affordability for Families' represents, as gathered in the interviews, the perceived affordability for families to enable their children to pursue education by purchasing the required reading materials or technological devices. It was stated that such a problem was exacerbated during the covid-19 pandemic, due to the forced online education. The affordability of education is not only related to the economic sphere but also to the possibility for parents to bring their children to school. Such phenomenon is directly linked to the 3<sup>rd</sup> performance driver that affects the building up or deployment of the net-flow 'Change in School Dropout', namely the 'Public Transportation Effectiveness Ratio'. This driver gauges the actual capability of public transportation to meet users' needs and expectations compared to a desired level. Such driver is affected by the strategic resource 'Public Transportation Effectiveness' which is built up or deployed by the related flow 'Change in Public Transportation Effectiveness', which in turn is affected by two performance drivers, i.e.: 'Proximity Ratio' and 'Public Transportation Extensiveness Ratio'. The 1<sup>st</sup> driver measures the actual distance between bus stops and metro stations from the households in the neighborhood compared to a desired level. This driver is affected by the strategic resource 'Public Transportation Stop Proximity from households'. Currently, the San Filippo neighborhood is served by one bus route, the

619 line, and by one metro station distance 2.5 km for a walkable distance of an average of 40 minutes. Lastly, the 2<sup>nd</sup> performance driver gauges the extensiveness of public transportation, namely the actual coverage of public transportation serving the neighborhood that connects the neighborhood to the entire city. To illustrate, residents of the San Filippo Neri neighborhood are required to take at least two connections to reach the city center. This results in an extended travel time, thereby diminishing the effectiveness of the public transportation system. When examining the performance of public transportation and its associated drivers and strategic resources, it is crucial to consider the significant problem of frequent delays in the public transport system. The combined effect of these various factors consistently diminishes the effectiveness of public transportation, resulting in an increased likelihood of students arriving late to school. Consequently, this negatively affects their academic performance and contributes to a rise in school discipline referrals, potentially leading to school suspension and ultimately, school dropout.

Public transportation effectiveness does not only have a crucial impact on the outcome of 'Change in School Dropout' but also on the outcome of 'Change in Employment Opportunities', which in turn change the endowment of the strategic resources 'Employment Opportunities'. Indeed, a diminished effectiveness of public transportation would result in a reduced likelihood of securing employment mostly due to the inability to arrive regularly or move around the city quickly without the use of a private vehicle.

The strategic resource 'School Dropout' affects the end result 'Change in Employment Opportunities', this causal connection portrays the impact that a low education level has on the possibilities that people may find proper employment in the future.

Both the strategic resources 'School Dropout' and 'Employment Opportunities', through their drivers, affect the intermediate outcome 'Change in Crime Level' and the final outcome 'Change in Social Inclusion'. The first outcome fed into the stock 'Crime Level' which changes the stock of 'Perceived Crime Level' which, through the driver 'Perceived Crime Level Ratio' which compares the actual level to one of the other neighborhoods, changes the outcome related to the perceived seriousness of crime in the San Filippo Neri neighborhood. The more the perceived seriousness the less the neighborhood is perceived as safe by external actors. The strategic resource 'Perceived Safety by External Stakeholders' affects the driver 'Perceived Safety Ratio', the outcome 'Change in Societal Bias against Neighborhood'. Through these causal relationships, there are different phenomena represented. The first one relates to the experience of feeling safe in a given area. The perceived safety plays a significant role in an individual's sense of attachment to a place as well as the construction of their perception of a neighborhood. These feelings of safety were

frequently influential in making decisions related to economic or social consumption, such as purchasing or renting a house, engaging in recreational activities in public parks, driving or walking through a neighborhood, or becoming a member of a neighborhood association (Zavattaro, 2019). Moreover, a high/low perceived safety impact positively/negatively on a place's reputation (Zavattaro, 2019) and therefore, the construction of a societal bias against the neighborhood. The interviewees provided exhaustive descriptions of such a type of bias. Examples of prejudice are frequently observed at schools, as students from particular neighborhoods are often subjected to marginalization. This bias is further emphasized by the media's representation of news through newspaper headlines, or even the unfounded connection of a certain crime to a resident of Zen, made by external actors, without any substantiating evidence.

The media and newspapers have consistently focused on the neighborhood, seizing every opportunity to highlight its negative aspects. This excessive attention can be attributed to the fact that regional news reports, when covered on a national scale, tend to generate interest. Additionally, the neighborhood's association with renowned architects further contributes to its newsworthiness. (Fava, 2008; Scelsi, 2020). Since the 1980s, there has been a growing presence of Zen in various media outlets such as newspapers, reportages, and television. Additionally, there has been some limited attention given to Zen in the fields of urban planning and sociology studies (Fava, 2008: 64). In his book on Zen, anthropologist Ferdinando Fava endeavors to challenge the prevailing stereotype by delving deeper than common clichés. He achieves this by actively engaging with the local residents over a span of two years, during which he resided in the neighborhood. Fava examines various sources including newspaper articles, sociological studies, and urban planning studies. He demonstrates that throughout the years, these different fields of knowledge have consistently employed overarching categories to analyze the phenomenon. Examples of such categories include the "culture of poverty" and the "mafia" (Fava 2008; Scelsi, 2020: 45).

The perpetuation of a distorted image of the neighborhood has been consistently observed across various fields of knowledge, as well as being reinforced by scientific studies. This distorted perception is a result of consistently viewing the neighborhood through the same lenses. Fava (2008) explores the deteriorated state of suburban areas, the deviant behavior exhibited by their residents, and the symbolic representation of the journey towards achieving Zen. The author also refers to these suburbs as a metaphorical depiction of a living hell. The portrayal of the neighborhood remains consistently uniform in nature: the narrator recounts a harrowing expedition into the depths of despair, delving into the social and urban tribulations of a destitute community (Scelsi, 2020).



The narrative structure employed in recounting the journey to discuss Zen inadvertently perpetuates the prevailing stereotype surrounding the neighborhood, accentuating the perceived divide that separates it from the rest of the city. The aforementioned descriptions, which have been increasingly prevalent for nearly three decades, fail to contribute to a deeper comprehension of this locality. Instead, they merely perpetuate stereotypes. The limited number of individuals who attempt to challenge the stigmatized perception of the neighborhood aim to demonstrate that not everything is entirely negative. They argue that even in Zen, there are elements of ordinary life. However, their efforts are initially unsuccessful as a widespread media campaign inundates the neighborhood with numerous films, books, and articles that perpetuate the negative stereotypes (Scelsi, 2020).

It is common to hear “It was for sure someone living in the Zen neighborhood who stole that car/vandalized that wall/destroyed that common good”. This societal prejudice not only results in a change in social inclusion but also shapes the neighborhood image. Such outcome is also affected by the stock ‘Quality of Life’, whose net flow is built up or deployed by the stock ‘Social Inclusion’ and ‘Water & Energy Supply Accessibility’ through the drivers ‘Social Inclusion Ratio’ and ‘Accessibility Ratio’ (both ratios are gauged as a fraction between the actual level and the desired one). Such drivers gave the perception of how residents’ quality of life changes its endowment due to these factors. It is important to remark that although quality of life is a crucial and broad-spectrum variable, the primary emphasis of this study is the problem of social exclusion. The focus of the analysis is mostly on the final outcome of "social inclusion," even though examining the quality of life as a desired outcome may provide insights into other aspects that influence the system. Other factors that can impact an individual's quality of life include the availability of employment opportunities, the level of crime within a certain area, and the perception of safety, among others. In this regard, the European Union proposes that the measurement of quality of life should encompass several indicators, including material living conditions, health, education, leisure and social interactions, economic security and physical safety, productive or main activity, governance and basic rights, natural and living environment, and overall experience of life (Garcia-Bernabeu et al., 2022).

The objective of this study was to examine the influence of these variables on social inclusion, taking into account their implications for overall quality of life.

The stock ‘Water & Energy Supply Accessibility’ portrays an important phenomenon leading to a decreased residents’ quality of life, namely the illegal occupation of the social

housing units in the Zen 2 area. This phenomenon led to the impossibility of establishing both water and energy supply for those residents living in such housing units<sup>5</sup>.

The issue of house emergencies in the neighborhood has acquired distinct connotations that have significantly shaped the area's history. The unlawful occupation of the area by displaced individuals, initially in the Zen1 buildings and subsequently in the Zen2 buildings, was not addressed or rectified by a housing policy that upheld the right to adequate housing as a fundamental safeguard of basic citizenship rights (Scelsi, 2020).

The housing assignment system has consistently experienced delays and has been influenced by clientelism. While the residents of Zen1 have successfully attained satisfactory housing dimensions over time through legitimate assignments, the situation in Zen2 remains problematic. Despite the settlement being constructed four decades ago, there is still a notable prevalence of illegal housing occupation. This significantly impacts housing conditions, including the provision of essential services and the upkeep of both housing units and public areas. The legalization of occupations at Zen1 since the 1990s has resulted in a notable enhancement in the overall quality of life for residents as well as improvements in the surrounding environment. While the situation at Zen1 gradually became normalized and increasingly integrated into the peripheral framework of Palermo, Zen2 remained isolated from the city. It lacked essential infrastructure networks and did not have schools until the late 1990s. The absence of essential urban services such as water, electricity, gas, and sewerage, coupled with inadequate housing policies implemented by the government, has contributed to the emergence of an alternative system. This system, overseen by organized crime groups, has taken charge of providing these services and managing illegal occupations. Undocumented residents are compelled to resort to organized criminal activities in order to secure access to water, electricity, or a place to live (Scelsi, 2020).

The flows changing the strategic resources 'Water & Energy Supply Accessibility', 'Public Transportation Stop Proximity from households' and 'Public Transportation proximity to city hubs' are affected by the strategic resource 'Infrastructure & Services Provision', gauged through the performance driver 'Infrastructure & Services Provision Ratio' (ratio between the actual level and the desired one). The provision of public services and infrastructure is tightly related to the municipal administration's capacity to comply with the necessity for such services, which is captured by the ratio '% of enforced policy intervention Ratio'. Its capacity is enhanced or hampered by the governance legitimacy which is affected by the trust that residents and involved stakeholders have in both municipal government and

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<sup>5</sup> These housing are controlled and managed by the IACP (*Istituto Autonomo Case Popolari*).

the existing network in the neighborhood. Trust, as portrayed in the DPG is affected by the strategic resources framing social inclusion. More in detail, a higher level of social exclusion would lead to a decreased sense of attachment and trust towards the municipal government and broadly to the actors involved in the area.

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions asserts that the level of trust among citizens and organizations towards institutions, which serves as an intermediate outcome, is contingent upon various factors. These factors include the perceived quality of public services, the level of education, the presence of societal tensions, perceived safety, income levels, and the perceived well-being of the community (European Quality of Life Survey, 2016).

In more detail, variations in trust levels can influence citizens' inclination to engage in community life, since it affects their level of civic-mindedness. Civic mindedness can be characterized as a voluntary sense of belonging to the community or a sense of responsibility towards it. Civic mindedness facilitates the development of greater public goods due to the active involvement of individuals in community life.

The achievement of effective collaborative policies is contingent upon this outcome, as it necessitates the active engagement of citizens. The involvement of citizens is crucial for the effectiveness of policies and, consequently, the provision of services. This is because citizens play a critical role in co-creating the value associated with these services. The concept of co-production of public services is intricately connected to the co-creation of value for users, stakeholders, and society, as emphasized by Osborne et al. (2016).

The determination of this value is predominantly influenced by the contentment and perceptions of the residents, along with its effect on their quality of life and the extent to which it satisfies their needs. Individuals possess the ability to collectively create value, whether for their benefit or the benefit of others, by influencing their opinions and perceptions of a specific public service. Public services co-production and value co-creation play a pivotal role in the San Filippo Neri neighborhood, aiming to enhance the overall social inclusion and quality of life for residents.

These efforts are aimed at improving social inclusion and the overall quality of life for its residents. This objective is accomplished by fostering the coordination of public service provision, through the active involvement of diverse stakeholders from both the public and private sectors, as well as civil society. Stakeholders involved in collaborative initiatives are portrayed by the stocks 'Municipal Administration Capacity', 'Active citizens', and 'Non-profit Organizations'. The actors involved are for example: the Municipality of Palermo, *ZEN Insieme*, *Unicef*, *Terradamare*, *SOS Ballarò*, and many other organizations. The stock

of ‘Collaborative Initiatives’, through the driver ‘% of enforced initiatives Ratio’ impact on two stocks namely the ‘effectiveness of collaborative initiatives’ and the ‘pervasiveness of collaborative initiatives’. In this particular domain, the significance is not in the number of collaborative initiatives, but rather in the depth and extent of the executed activities inside the respective field which is captured by the ratio ‘% of impacted residents’ ratio’. This approach is crucial as it serves as the sole means to drive transformative change. Furthermore, these two significant indicators also pertain to the degree of coordination among the entities, necessitating a continuous and well-organized approach. Indeed, an increase in the intensity and interchange of information and resources will lead to greater benefits for the area. As a result, the extent to which the implemented activities are delivered and implemented in a widespread manner will have a corresponding impact on residents’ social inclusion as well as a change in the neighborhood image, trust levels, the affordability of education, the societal bias against the neighborhood and ultimately challenge the dominant culture and values. A clear example of the impact that effective and pervasive collaborative initiatives has on the affordability of education is given by the project implemented by *ZEN Insieme* of building a library, called “*Biblioteca Giufà*” in the neighborhood with a consistent section for children. The library was established with the support of the *Laboratorio Zen Insieme* and the *Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana - Treccani*. It was funded through contributions from the Eight per Thousand of the Waldensian Church and donations from towns and citizens, obtained through a participatory bookraising campaign.

The Giufà neighborhood library caters to children, young people, mothers, and schools in the area. This place aims to become a cultural and social hub for Zen enthusiasts, providing a welcoming environment for learning, discussion, and reading. The idea behind this is that to truly contribute to the development of an educating community, it is necessary to engage in direct action that fosters experimentation and exchange.

By challenging the dominant culture and values it is possible to affect not only the municipal administration capacity but also foster a change in the levels of civic mindedness and the parents’ perceived role attributed to education.

#### **4.4. Framing the cause-and-effect relationships of the San Filippo Neri neighborhood through a Causal Loop Diagram**

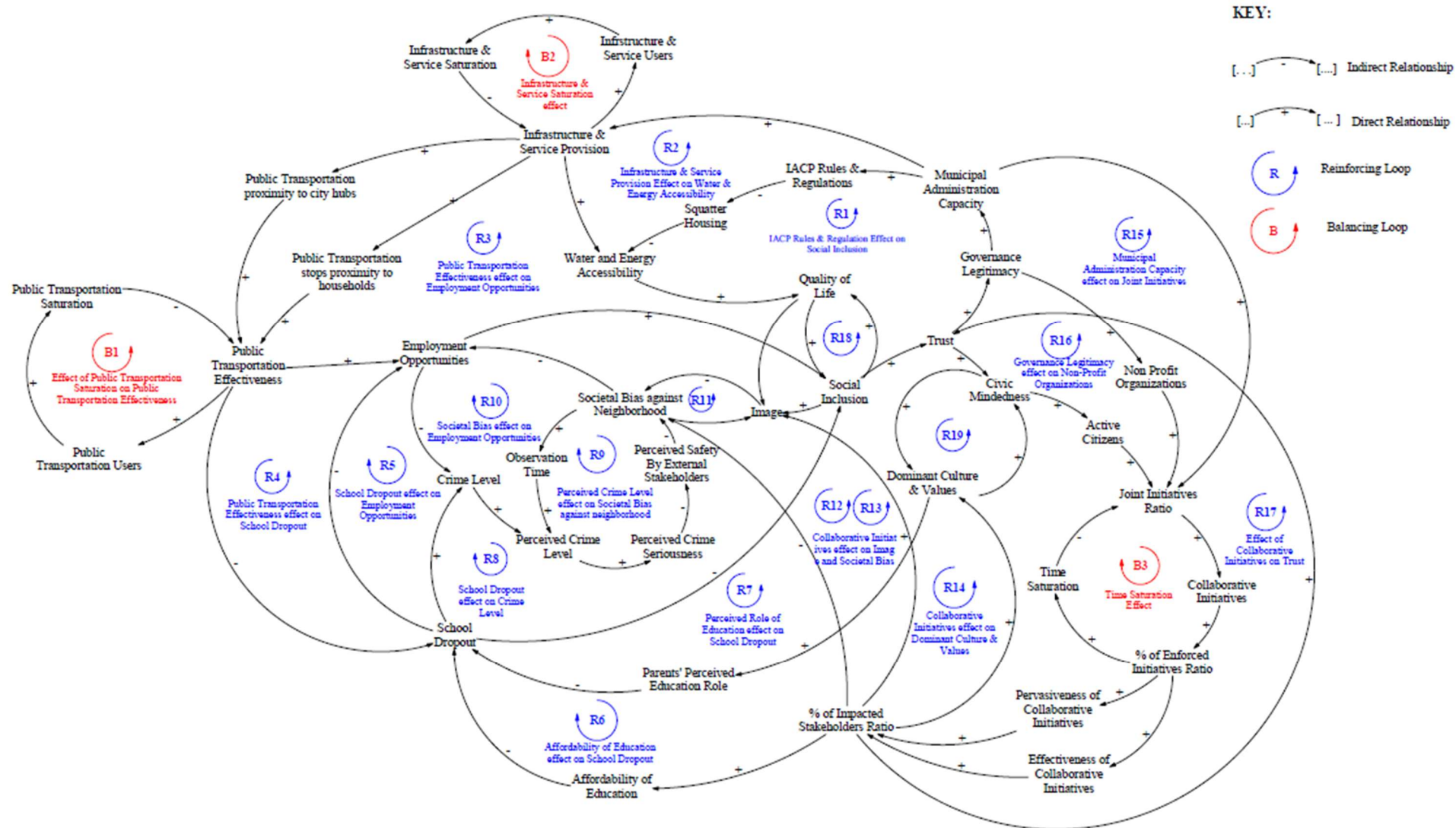


Figure 16. A Causal Loop Diagram portraying the causal relationship of the social exclusion phenomenon in the San Filippo Neri Neighborhood (Source: Created by the researcher using Vensim ® PLE 8.2.1.)

Reinforcing Loop **R1 (IACP Rules & Regulation effect on Social Exclusion)** examines the impact of inadequate management in public housing on social inclusion, highlighting a decline in this aspect of the problem. The San Filippo Neri neighborhood, particularly ZEN 2, has experienced a significant prevalence of unauthorized occupancy in public housing units since its establishment. Illegal occupiers face challenges in acquiring property due to the strict rules and regulations of the IACP. The high costs associated with buying the property pose a significant obstacle to their efforts. This affects the ability to regulate the phenomenon and it remains in a state of stagnation. The reinforcing loop R1 shows that inadequate IACP rules and regulations lead to more squatter housing, which in turn hinders illegal occupiers' access to water and energy. This reduction in quality of life consequently affects the level of social inclusion, which in turn impacts again on the quality of life - reinforcing loop **R18** -. Lower social inclusion is associated with lower trust, resulting in decreased legitimacy and reduced interest in the municipal administration to allocate capacity to address such aspects. Another factor that worsens the phenomenon is illustrated by the reinforcing loop **R2 (Infrastructure & Services Provision effect on Water & Energy Accessibility)**, which pertains to the effect of infrastructure and services provision on water and energy accessibility. This loop demonstrates the influence of a limited allocation of resources by municipal administration on the construction and provision of infrastructure and services, particularly in relation to the accessibility of water and energy. In greater detail, it has been observed that certain public works pertaining to water and energy supply in ZEN 2 public housing have remained incomplete. This had a significant impact on the quality of life for the residents.

The balancing loop **B2 (Infrastructure & Services Saturation effect)** is associated with the infrastructure and service provision. This balancing loop illustrates the impact of an increase in infrastructure and service provision users. As the number of users increases, it leads to a higher level of connected saturation. However, this increase in saturation negatively affects the provision of services itself.

The reinforcing loops **R3 (Public Transportation Effectiveness effect on employment opportunities)** and **R4 (Public Transportation Effectiveness on school dropout)** show the influence of two factors, namely the proximity of public transportation stops to households and the proximity of public transportation to city hubs, on the overall effectiveness of public transportation. These factors play a significant role in determining the impact of public transportation on employment opportunities and school dropout rates. The closer a neighborhood is to city hubs and public transportation stops, the greater the employment opportunities available to residents. This is because residents can freely move

around the city and access various job opportunities through easy connections. Additionally, proximity to these city hubs and transportation stops also contributes to lower rates of school dropout. This is because students can arrive at school on time, which positively impacts their overall academic performance. The San Filippo Neri neighborhood currently experiences a low level of public transportation effectiveness, resulting in a reduced likelihood of accessing employment opportunities and an increased likelihood of school dropout.

Related to the public transportation effectiveness, the diagram depicted in Figure 16 illustrates a balancing loop denoted as **B1 (Effect of Public Transportation Saturation on Public Transportation Effectiveness)**, which represents the relationship between public transportation saturation and its effectiveness. The balancing loop serves as a constraint on the exponential growth or decline depicted by the reinforcing loops R3 and R4. In greater detail, as the effectiveness of public transportation increases, there is a higher probability that residents will utilize it more frequently. Consequently, this increased usage can lead to a saturation of available spaces, resulting in a decline in the overall effectiveness of the public transportation system serving the area.

Another reinforcing loop that is connected to employment opportunities is **R10 (Societal Bias effect on Employment Opportunities)**, which represents the effect of societal bias on employment opportunities. As evidenced by the DPG chart presented earlier and supported by interview data, social exclusion is driven by a societal bias that is perpetuated by external actors such as neighboring residents, organizations, businesses, and the media. As the level of bias increases, the availability of employment opportunities for residents decreases. This scenario increases the probability of unemployed individuals engaging in criminal activities such as robbery or drug trafficking, as well as becoming involved in organized crime. Consequently, it also contributes to a higher level of social bias.

There are additional reinforcing loops associated with school dropout, namely **R5 (School Dropout effect on Employment Opportunities)** and **R8 (School Dropout effect on Crime Level)**. The first examines the adverse impact of a low level of education on an individual's prospects of securing a high-quality job. The second investigates the probability of young individuals, who dropped out of school, engaging in criminal activities.

As the frequency of criminal activities increases, so does the perceived level of crime in the neighborhood. This, in turn, heightens the perception of the seriousness of the crimes committed, leading to a decrease in the perceived safety of the area by external stakeholders. Consequently, there is an increase in societal bias against the neighborhood and its residents. This phenomenon is represented by the reinforcing loop **R9 (Perceived crime level effect**

**on societal bias against neighborhood**), which illustrates the effect of perceived crime level on societal bias against the neighborhood. The neighborhood experienced a decline in its reputation due to a prevalent societal bias, resulting in a negative impact on the overall perception of the neighborhood. This reciprocal relationship is exemplified by the reinforcing loop **R11**.

To address the problem of social exclusion in the San Filippo Neri neighborhood, collaborative initiatives should examine various underlying factors such as school dropout, job opportunities, crime rates, and societal biases. By identifying these overlapping issues, it becomes possible to develop a range of interrelated projects that can simultaneously address multiple problems. The impact of social inclusion on the levels of trust that residents and other stakeholders have towards governments and non-profit organizations is a significant aspect to take into account. As emphasized in the interviews, establishing trust with residents was deemed essential for the NGO Zen Insieme. The interviewees emphasized that this organization is actively engaged in collaborating with the community rather than working for it without involving the community itself in projects. This suggests that there is a significant correlation between the residents and the organization, resulting in active participation from local communities and an enhancement in the legitimacy of non-profit organizations, as well as the capacity of municipal administration. The process is illustrated by the reinforcing loops **R16 (Governance Legitimacy effect on Non-profit organizations)**, which represents the effect of Governance Legitimacy on Non-profit organizations, and **R15 (Municipal administration capacity effect on Joint initiatives ratio)**, which represents the effect of Municipal administration capacity on Joint initiatives ratio. Another crucial component to consider when investigating trust is its impact on civic-mindedness. As trust levels increase, there is a corresponding increase in civic mindedness, resulting in a greater number of actively engaged citizens. The greater the involvement of active citizens, non-profit organizations, and municipal administration, the higher the number of collaborative initiatives and consequently the percentage of successfully implemented initiatives. The pervasiveness and effectiveness of collaborative initiatives increase as these initiatives are enforced more rigorously. This can be measured by the percentage of stakeholders who are impacted, including residents, external actors such as public and private sector organizations, other citizens, and non-profit organizations. The pervasiveness and effectiveness of collaborative initiatives contribute to the increased affordability of education, which subsequently leads to a reduction in school dropout rates. This relationship is demonstrated in the reinforcing loop **R6 (Affordability of Education**



**effect on school dropout**), which highlights the impact of the affordability of education on school dropout. Several initiatives have been implemented to enhance the affordability of education. Two notable examples include the provision of afterschool activities and the establishment of the Giufà library. Furthermore, these activities have an impact on both societal bias and image, specifically reinforcing loops **R12** and **R13 (Collaborative Initiatives effect on Image and Societal Bias)**. For instance, certain activities are geared towards revitalizing urban spaces within the neighborhood, such as the establishment of a park during the Manifesta event. Additionally, efforts are made to attract external stakeholders through events like the Zen Book Festival held in October 2023. Furthermore, collaborative initiatives, exemplified by the reinforcing loop **R14 (Collaborative initiatives effect on Dominant Values & Culture)**, have a positive influence on the prevailing culture and values that shape the neighborhood. Initiatives targeting the aforementioned aspects include the Giufà library, activities designed to empower women, and various programs catering to the needs of parents and their children. Finally, the implementation of these initiatives results in a notable enhancement in the level of trust, as demonstrated by the reinforcing loop **R17 (Effect of Collaborative Initiatives on Trust)**. Simultaneously, an increase in civic-mindedness contributes to a transformation in the prevailing culture and values, thereby generating a positive influence on civic-mindedness. The behavior in question is depicted by the reinforcing loop **R19**.

It is crucial to note that the reinforcing loops associated with collaborative initiatives do not exhibit unlimited growth. One significant limitation is associated with the limited amount of time that non-profit organizations, municipal administrations, and active citizens have available to devote to such initiatives. The portrayal of this phenomenon is exemplified through the implementation of the balancing feedback loop **B3 (time saturation effect)**. Another potential limitation to this growth could be related to the limited availability of staff, as well as other resource constraints such as financial availability or skills.

#### **4.5. Stakeholders Analysis**

In the San Filippo Neri neighborhood, there exists a network of stakeholders who play a crucial role in addressing the phenomenon of social exclusion. To better capture the different roles of different stakeholders, whether the network is formally or informally established, it is possible to adopt a stakeholder network map. The diagram presented in Figure 17 depicts the different degrees of significance attributed to stakeholders engaged in addressing the problem of social exclusion. Each circle within the diagram represents a

unique level of relevance. Stakeholders situated in the inner circles of the network exhibit a higher level of significance, influence, and commitment in comparison to those positioned in the outer circles.

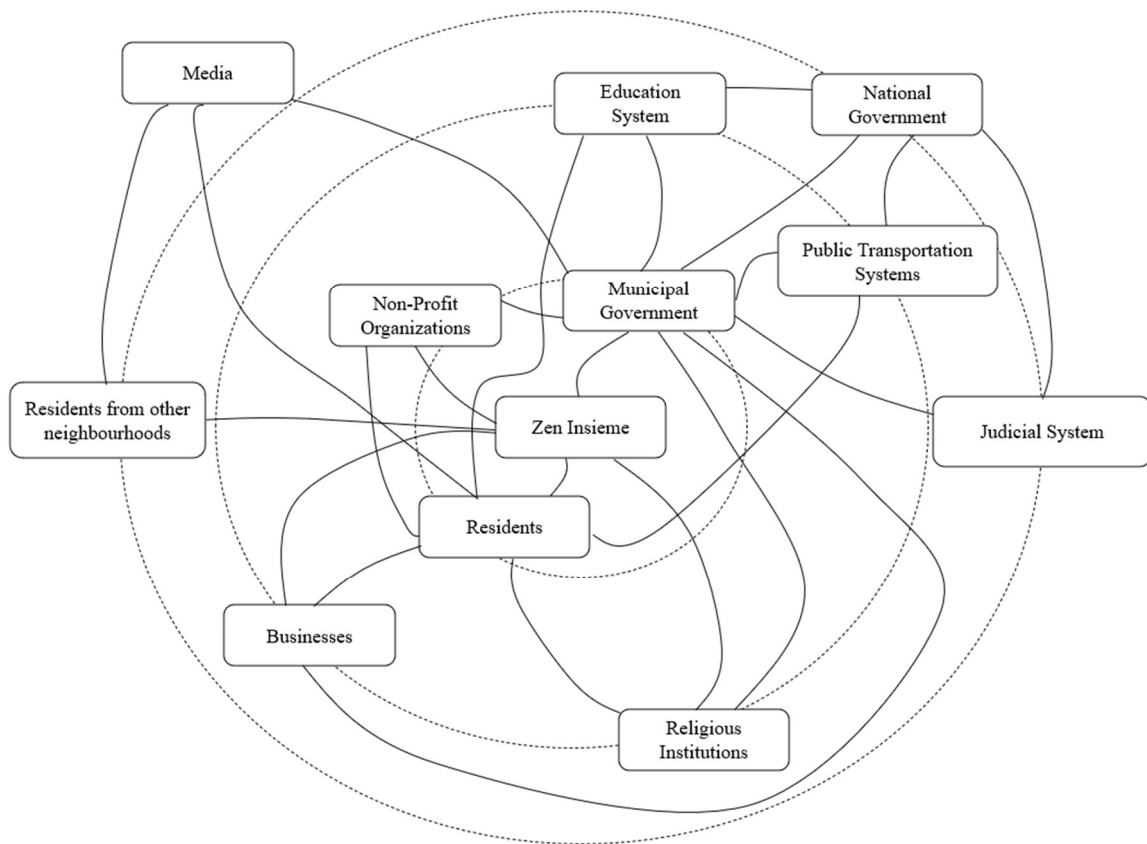


Figure 17. Stakeholders' relationships map (Created by the author with Microsoft PowerPoint).

The Laboratorio Zen Insieme Association, along with residents, other non-profit organizations, and the Municipality of Palermo, forms the central foundation of the network. Despite being the stakeholder with the highest capacity, the Municipality of Palermo lacks a commitment in the network process.

The main commitment is taken on the ZEN Insieme Association, in collaboration with local residents and various non-profit organizations with whom ZEN Insieme has established diverse relationships. Zen Insieme has established partnerships with various organizations, including Save the Children, Orto Capovolto, EMMAUS Italia Onlus, E.D.I., In Medias Res, Centro Studi Paolo Borsellino, IUSP - Sport per tutti, Associazione San Giovanni Apostolo Onlus, Cotti in Fraganza, Human Rights Youth Organization - HRYO, Associazione Santa Chiara Palermo, I ragazzi del centro tau Onlus, among others<sup>6</sup>. These partnerships exemplify the collaborative relationships that Zen Insieme has formed with a wide range of organizations.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.zeninsieme.it/partner-2/>

Beyond the inner circle, there exist additional systems that significantly influence the reality of the San Filippo Neri neighborhood, albeit with a lesser degree of involvement compared to the stakeholders within the inner circle. The systems and stakeholders in question are the education, public transportation, and judicial systems, respectively. These systems have a significant impact on the local community, as indicated in the previous DPG chart.

The media, along with other external stakeholders (e.g., businesses and religious institutions) and residents from neighboring areas, play an essential role in this context. These actors are positioned in the outsider circles due to their role, which usually is against the neighborhood, increasing the social exclusion phenomenon,, as discussed in previous sections of this chapter regarding social bias against neighborhood. To foster social inclusion, it is essential to establish robust relationships with these stakeholders. This will enable their active participation in collaborative initiatives and facilitate a cultural transition within and beyond the neighborhood, so as to foster social inclusion.

## CHAPTER 5

### MIDDLE EAST NEIGHBORHOOD CASE STUDY

The key to understanding and managing transitions is to take into consideration three areas: geography, technology, and institutions (Sach, 2020). Following these patterns, the next paragraphs will analyze the geographical and institutional framework of Baltimore, and in detail the Middle East neighborhood.

#### **5.1. Baltimore City: geography, scope, and main features**

Baltimore City is one of the most densely populated independent cities in the U.S. State of Maryland with an estimated population of 575,498 in 2021 (United States Census Bureau, 2022). This city is located in north-central Maryland on the Patapsco River, near the Chesapeake Bay. According to the United States Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 92.1 square miles of which 80.9 square miles of land.

Baltimore City has a high degree of policy-making autonomy level. It was designated as an independent city by the Constitution of Maryland in 1851.

##### **5.1.1. Baltimore City historical background**

Baltimore experienced significant growth and prosperity due to the influence and leadership of Irish linen merchants due to the wheat commerce. During the 1780s, the use of brick became common in Baltimore, establishing the city as a permanent fixture in the North Atlantic urban landscape (Duff, 2019: 124).

By 1850, the Renaissance had greatly influenced America, resulting in significant changes in the North Atlantic region. According to H.L. Mencken, these neighborhoods were described as "placid" (Duff, 2019: 169). For fifty years, the storefronts and warehouses of numerous wholesale merchants created a significant social divide between the unpleasant dockside environment of the merchants and the refined world of their families and spouses who attended the Assembly. The small size and inefficient design of their previous merchant houses played a role in the rapid expansion of central business districts. The growing trade volume led to the conversion of homes into warehouses and factories, displacing residents and posing a threat to social cohesion. The escalating fear within the urban environment was becoming increasingly unmanageable (Duff, 2019: 170).

Baltimore neighborhoods are characterized by the presence of row dwellings that were built specifically for the working class. Houses were commonly designed with two floors, measuring approximately thirteen to fifteen feet in width, and typically consisting of three rooms on each floor. Baltimore row houses are known for their flat-fronted and classical architectural style, with wide facades influenced by the Renaissance Revival movement (Duff, 2019: 190).

Coastal cities in the US were attractive residential areas before the World War. The United States had significant wealth in comparison to other countries and had a relatively equitable distribution of resources, leading to the development of prosperous middle- and working-class neighborhoods in American cities. American cities were important for commerce, urban development, and social activities like the Season of Assemblies and debutante balls. However, the observed strength of these factors was significantly reduced. By 1914, many young people had relocated to the suburbs, leaving their parents in the older urban areas with terraces and squares. The US witnessed an increasing consolidation of economic and political power. By 1914, people started to question the need to breathe polluted air in cities and pay taxes to corrupt politicians. They considered the option of living in suburban areas with ample green spaces and using trains or streetcars for commuting to work and shopping. Furthermore, they contemplated enrolling their children in esteemed educational institutions, exploring upscale vacation destinations, and becoming members of recently established social clubs to foster advantageous connections for their progeny. The decline of central neighborhoods in several cities was swift following the passing of the older generation and the subsequent relocation of their grandchildren to suburban areas. From 1917 to 1922, there was a notable change in homeownership in the houses near Mt. Vernon in Baltimore. During this period, approximately 80% of these houses shifted from being occupied by their owners to being owned by absentee individuals. Middle-class families reduced the construction of unfinished homes after 1918, imitating the wealthy (Duff, 2019: 203-204).

Urban sprawl in the United States is caused by a complex mix of values and objectives. All aspects were subject to different levels. People seek aesthetics, privacy, liberty, and tradition. The North Atlantic states and their towns experienced significant impacts from the Second World War. The conflict resulted in significant industrialization and internal migrations, which had a profound impact on the individuals involved. Approximately 12% of the total population, or 16 million individuals, were enlisted in the Army. In the meantime, the United States greatly increased its production of armaments and equipment to an unprecedented level. Industrial centers experienced a shortage of male and female workers, which hindered their productivity. Around ten million African Americans relocated from rural areas in the

Southern United States to urban industrial cities in the North during and after World War II. Their objective was to support the war by manufacturing ships, planes, and mattresses. After the war, these individuals resided in the North and worked with returning soldiers to maintain the high production of manufactured goods from American assembly lines for the next three decades. The Great Migration denotes the historical phenomenon in which African Americans relocated from the Southern United States to the Northern regions, as documented by historians, looking for improved living standards and freedom from the oppressive Jim Crow laws, lynching, and multiple manifestations of anti-black racism.. The same factors that contributed to success in foreign countries also played a role in causing urban instability in the United States. White Americans were hesitant to accept a significant increase of ten million African-American individuals into their communities. They were socialized to accept the belief of their biological inferiority. During World War II, white children were exposed to racial teachings alongside cultural education. Additionally, white adults accepted and normalized racial segregation in workplace assignments and the military during this time (Duff, 2019: 217). American communities sought to enforce racial segregation in housing as the black population increased, resulting in the establishment of separate neighborhoods known as "white blocks" and "black blocks." In 1944, African Americans were increasingly relocating from their segregated neighborhoods to rent or buy homes in predominantly white areas, thanks to their improved financial position resulting from industrial employment. "City of Anger" is William Manchester's novel that explores Baltimore's history during a period characterized by racial prejudice, where unethical real estate developers capitalized on the situation. The practice of "blockbusting" involved a speculator strategically placing a black family in a predominantly white neighborhood, causing fear among white residents and prompting them to sell their homes at lower prices. The speculator would then purchase these homes and rent or sell them to black families at inflated rates due to limited housing options. Overcrowding among individuals of all races led to increased stress. After the war, middle-class white urban residents quickly sold their homes and moved to the outskirts of the city, as far as their cars would take them. In a global economy without competition, American industries experienced no rivals, leading to an increase in middle-class earnings for the white working class. Consequently, they were able to afford vehicles. The Great Migration did not cause white America's suburbanization, but it did make it more difficult to reverse (Duff, 2019: 218).

Post-war, the United States faced a significant housing shortage. Since the onset of the Great Depression in 1929, there has been a significant decline in the construction of residential properties. Meanwhile, the population had grown by approximately 15 million, with 10

million individuals migrating from the South to the North. In the capital and major industrial cities, the influx of war laborers, mainly from the agricultural areas of the South, had strained markets significantly. Americans desired a suburban lifestyle with access to motorized transportation. They advocated for government assistance in the form of insured mortgages to purchase houses from private builders, rather than requesting complex planned landscapes. The individuals received numerous benefits from the government. Government mortgages were primarily restricted to newly built homes as part of the United States government's initiatives to tackle the housing shortage and stimulate housing construction. Obtaining a mortgage for an older urban home presented difficulties. Black Americans were excluded from government mortgage programs, a practice commonly referred to as "redlining," which effectively prevented them from residing in post-war suburban areas due to widespread racism in America. White individuals benefited from a dual bias that favored new homes and disadvantaged black buyers. This resulted in white individuals obtaining affordable mortgages to purchase suburban houses, while black individuals were left with older homes and burdened by expensive mortgages in urban areas. If the new black urban residents possessed equivalent income, wealth, and marketable skills as the white individuals they replaced, this circumstance would have been considered unacceptable. Nevertheless, the existence of three centuries of slavery and the implementation of Jim Crow laws hindered the realization of this ideal. Federal mortgage rules had a significant detrimental impact on American cities. Both white and black individuals during that period lacked a comprehensive understanding of the situation (Duff, 2019: 225).

There was the perception that sprawl is linked to elitism. There is a positive correlation between larger home lots and higher levels of wealth in the population.

Public housing complexes were highly visible and infamous residential buildings in the United States after World War II. This was the only occasion in which American governments engaged in real estate development. Public housing in the United States was constructed and overseen by local authorities with the assistance of federal funding, and its architectural style adhered strictly to modern principles. Public housing was created to provide temporary housing for a specific group of stable families who were impacted by the Great Depression. Public housing developments were intentionally designed to dissuade residents from remaining once they experienced financial improvement, resulting in the deliberate establishment of unappealing and degrading living conditions. A total of seven public housing units were constructed in the city of Baltimore.

Following the war, private developers in America successfully resolved the housing shortage. Consequently, families residing in public housing were able to acquire homes

through government-insured mortgages, aligning with the original purpose of such initiatives. Nevertheless, the structures and administrative systems linked to public housing remained in place. Public housing in the late 1950s unintentionally resulted in the creation of enduring housing options for individuals facing persistent poverty. In the early 1960s, adult unemployment rates were elevated, and the number of children surpassed that of adults by a minimum ratio of 2:1. During that time, the African-American community constituted the majority of residents, while the white population had migrated to different areas. This situation was unfavorable due to the presence of racial bias and widespread disdain towards individuals receiving government assistance in the country. American projects were prominent due to their frequent construction through the clearance of slums in older communities located near downtown areas. In American urban areas, unappealing apartment complexes were deliberately constructed around the business districts to house a marginalized population that faced discrimination based on their low socioeconomic status and racial heritage. According to the author (Duff, 2019: 229), public housing had adverse effects on residents and deterred non-residents from participating in downtown activities. The Great Migration prompted the discussion of race in the previously silent rural South, while the Civil Rights Movement in the early 1960s evoked both relief and bitterness among individuals of different races. After the initial victories in the struggle for brotherhood and equality, there emerged a trend where impassioned black speakers advocated for violence as a means to achieve "Black Power," while equally impassioned white speakers advocated for oppressive measures under the guise of "law and order." From the summer of 1964 to the spring of 1968, there were persistent and violent riots characterized by burning streets and looted stores. White individuals found no comfort in the alignment of justice and human nature with black activists. The simultaneous rise in black violence and crime rates in America after a period of two generations did not contribute positively to the situation. During the late 1960s, the mortality rates of young black males in American cities were comparable to those observed in major wars. Consequently, there was a tendency among white individuals to attribute blame to black individuals. The phenomenon known as "White Flight," referring to the departure of white residents from urban areas in response to the presence of black communities, intensified in correlation with the rise of the "Black Power" movement. Despite the flight's lack of consideration, it was not the sole instance of impolite behavior in response to the issue. By 1980, a significant number of white Americans associated the term "city" with the concept of a "ghetto" (Duff, 2019: 231).

The economic crisis had a significant impact on most industrial workers. During the early 1970s, Japanese automobiles and televisions were both superior and more affordable



compared to their American counterparts. Additionally, the Oil Shock of 1974 resulted in a significant increase in fuel prices, which led consumers to shift away from the large and inefficient automobiles produced by Detroit. Approximately 66% of Baltimore's manufacturing jobs were eliminated. The sight of abandoned factories and deteriorating row houses in East Baltimore caused distress among rail passengers (Duff, 2019: 233).

Despite the persistence of the Urban Crisis in several cities, significant changes have been implemented, resulting in an improved quality of life for many urban residents, surpassing the expectations of observers in 1975.

In 1975, a downtown skyscraper stood amidst deteriorating piers, declining industry, and vacant land. Following a series of deteriorated row buildings, some of which were covered in a synthetic stone known as Formstone, there was a vacant area spanning sixty acres. Within this area, there was a cluster of unoccupied houses lacking windows (Duff, 2019: 238).

The inner harbor of Baltimore is currently enclosed by towering skyscrapers. Nevertheless, the Urban Crisis persists. Despite the achievements of Baltimore residents, they were experiencing notable problems. Baltimore is widely acknowledged as the primary hub for heroin distribution and usage within the United States. The murder rate in American cities often ranks among the highest in the nation. The factory workforce has declined significantly from 300,000 individuals in 1975 to approximately 100,000 presently, while public schools exhibit subpar performance. Consequently, individuals with limited educational attainment faced difficulties in securing employment opportunities as a consequence of the diminishing job prospects in the manufacturing sector. Approximately 80% of the urban poor live within the city limits, which accounts for approximately 25% of the total metropolitan population. Consequently, the tax rate in the city is twice as high as that in its suburban counties, and the municipal government faces a shortage of funds for the maintenance of the metropolitan area's oldest infrastructure, including roads, bridges, water systems, and sewer lines. To fulfill the needs of the underprivileged population and aid in their upliftment from poverty, the city is willing to explore alternative funding options (Duff, 2019: 239).

Apart from the inner harbor and suburban areas, Baltimore has become characterized by a fragmented landscape consisting of vacant lots, abandoned housing, and boarded-up stores. Furthermore, the presence of neighborhood commercial activity declined in redeveloped areas. Research conducted in the 1960s indicates that over 100,000 residents of Baltimore lived in high-poverty neighborhoods by 1990. The Baltimore inner city experienced the concurrent presence of various social issues, including drug abuse, poverty, unemployment, crime, family instability, and physical deterioration. These challenges exhibit mutual

reinforcement, particularly in distressed neighborhoods, where each problem exacerbates other issues and impedes their resolution, thereby overwhelming the community's ability to effectively address them.

Ghetto neighborhoods are facing challenges due to the decline of entry-level manufacturing jobs, the increase in service employment that demands higher skills and education, and the relocation of industries from the central city to the suburbs. This has resulted in a mismatch between the skills possessed by its residents and the skills required for available jobs, as well as limited access to job opportunities due to educational or geographical barriers.

The issue of poverty has gained renewed attention primarily because of the influential and impactful book "The Truly Disadvantaged" (1987) written by William J. Wilson. His merit lies in three main contributions. Firstly, he documented the correlation between community conditions and elevated rates of social problems. Secondly, he challenged the prevailing notion that life outcomes are solely influenced by factors within the family. Lastly, he presented an alternative perspective on the concept of the 'undeserving poor' (Gullino, 2009). The prevailing moral perspective views impoverished individuals as undeserving of aid due to the belief in America as a land of opportunities. According to Freeman (2003), being impoverished in a country of opportunities implies a personal flaw that hinders individuals from capitalizing on the numerous available opportunities. Wilson argues that impoverished environments have significant impacts on the individuals living within them. The findings suggest a significant association between residing in impoverished neighborhoods and further economic disadvantage among their inhabitants. Concentration and segregation are notable characteristics of American cities, including Baltimore. Low-income individuals are primarily concentrated in inner city areas, where they face a multitude of urban challenges, including disinvestment, inadequate environmental conditions, limited access to services, and often, insufficient transportation options.

The economic restructuring of a city has significantly impacted individuals, particularly by reducing employment opportunities for those with low incomes. The transition from an industrial to a technology-oriented economy centered around suburban areas necessitated a high level of skills, which are often lacking among individuals with low socioeconomic status. Poverty frequently correlates with low levels of education.

The outcome has been the exclusion of a significant portion of individuals from emerging economic trends and suburban regions.

## 5.2. Middle East Neighborhood

The Middle East neighborhood is a residential area located in the eastern part of East Baltimore, Maryland. As shown in Figure 18, the neighborhood is demarcated by East Biddle Street to the north, North Broadway to the west, Bradford Street to the east, and East Fayette Street to the south. In a clockwise direction originating from the northwest, the area under consideration is demarcated by the adjacent neighborhoods of Oliver and Broadway East to the north, Biddle Street, Milton-Milford, McElderry Park, and Patterson Place to the east, Butchers Hill and Washington Hill to the south, and Dunbar-Broadway and Gay Street to the west.

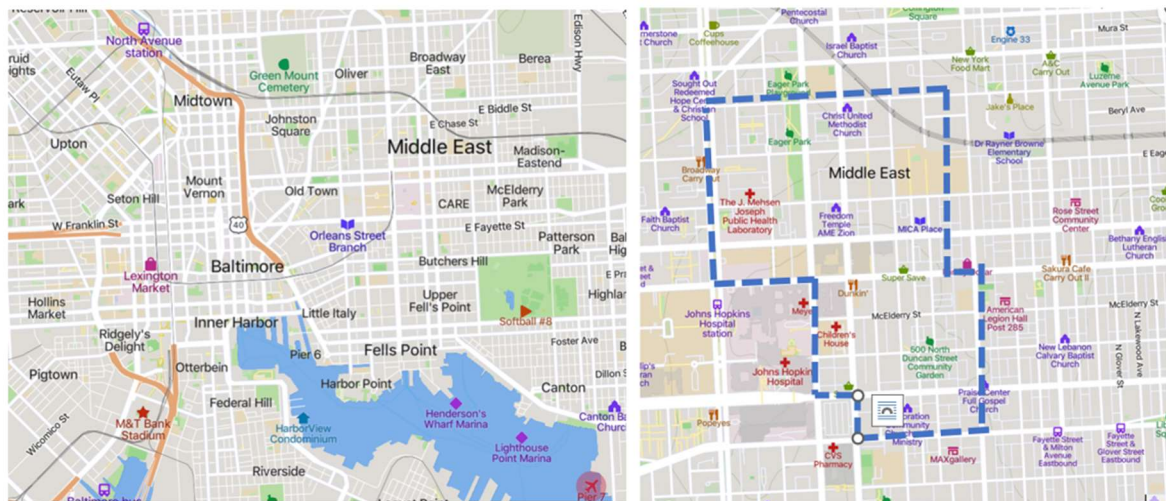


Figure 18. Baltimore Map and Look-up to the Middle-East Neighborhood (Retrieved from: <https://mapcarta.com/36305728>)

The neighborhood once exhibited a predominant demographic of white working-class individuals of Czech-American descent and currently encompasses St. Wenceslaus Church, a historically Czech parish that presently consists primarily of African-American residents. By 1969, the Czech-American immigrant population residing in Middle East neighborhood primarily consisted of elderly homeowners, coexisting with a relatively newer influx of African-American inhabitants. Nevertheless, a significant number of elderly Czech-Americans held prejudiced beliefs against African American residents. During the 1970s and 1980s, there was a demographic shift in the neighborhood which became largely inhabited by African Americans during the 1970s and 1980s (Hummel, 2007).

In 1978, the Middle East region had a total of 200 unoccupied residential properties. During a span of three years, a total of \$800,000 in federal grant funds was distributed. The neighborhood has experienced significant urban decay and housing abandonment as a result of socioeconomic challenges, including poverty and crime, compounded by the events that followed the Baltimore riot of 1968. Consequently, it is currently predominantly inhabited

by primarily from low-income and working-class backgrounds. Additionally, the area was adversely affected by outbreaks of heroin, crack cocaine, and HIV, which were further exacerbated by increased gang activity driven by the drug trade. The exacerbation of the pattern of decline and disinvestment can be attributed to the predatory practices employed by lenders, landlords, and property flippers (Levine, 2000). By the year 2000, the Middle East neighborhood in Baltimore had acquired the status of being the second most economically disadvantaged area, as evidenced by its median household income of \$14,900, which is less than half of the median household income of the city as a whole. The labor force participation rate for individuals was below 50%, while more than one-third of households experienced incomes at or below the poverty threshold. The rates of crime and domestic violence in the specified area were twice as high as the overall rates seen in the city. Additionally, the prevalence of lead poisoning and child maltreatment in this particular region ranked among the highest in Baltimore.

The Middle East neighborhood is currently experiencing a significant and continuous process of gentrification, resulting in the demolition of numerous buildings to accommodate the expansion of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. The East Baltimore Development Initiative (EBDI) was established in 2002, representing a notable and ambitious endeavor in contemporary American urban regeneration. Over the course of the last 17 years, Johns Hopkins University has encountered numerous instances of delays and disputes in its attempt to convert the surrounding neighborhoods into a biotechnology hub. This initiative aims to attract distinguished scientists and entrepreneurs from various countries, with the ultimate goal of transforming the urban environment from a predominantly working-class African-American neighborhood into a more diverse community encompassing individuals from different income levels and racial backgrounds. These efforts have been met with concerns about gentrification. Indeed, a total of 740 households have been displaced and subsequently relocated to facilitate the establishment of a new public school, alongside planned commercial establishments and a public park. The aforementioned impacts have faced criticism for their alleged racist and classist nature, with Lawrence Brown, a critical urbanist at Morgan State University, characterizing them as a manifestation of a powerful institution displacing a marginalized group for its advantage. According to Marisela Gomez, a prominent advocate opposing gentrification, there exists a discriminatory targeting of African-Americans, and low-income individuals (Gomez, 2012).

The neighborhood underwent a gradual process of rebranding, spearheaded by the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and its affiliated non-profit

organizations, collectively referred to as the 'non-profit industrial complex'<sup>7</sup>. Additionally, the city of Baltimore, the state of Maryland, and the burgeoning influx of new residents are also contributing to this transformative endeavor within the neighborhood. The newly introduced brand, known as 'Eager Park,' has emerged as a new area<sup>8</sup> (Gomez, 2012). Indeed, the process of re-branding is common in a developing area. It is not uncommon or atypical in the realm of urban development for the selection of a name to be influenced or even suggested by the developers and their representatives. In the specific case being discussed, Forest City and East Baltimore Development Inc. (EBDI) are the entities involved in this decision-making process (Gomez, 2012). The rebranding of the neighborhood, as highlighted by Gomez (2012) was crucial to veil the displacement reality that happened in the neighborhood. The redevelopment of the area, through the creation of the expansive 88-acre development took measures to acknowledge the displacement of over 750 Black families, who were compelled to vacate their residences to accommodate the construction of this 7-acre park and other associated developments. The original master plan did not include any explicit acknowledgment of the displacement of residents from their land to accommodate the establishment of a park. The prevailing discourse in 2001 asserted that the process of displacement was necessary to facilitate the demolition of over 2000 residences situated in these designated 'blighted' and abandoned areas. The utilization of eminent domain to acquire private land and subsequently transfer it to a private developer was facilitated through a collaborative effort between the municipal government and the university, akin to the partnership established during the 1950s. The government program that facilitated the financial gains of this private developer was urban redevelopment. The initial master plan implemented in 2001 rationalized the utilization of eminent domain as a means to procure residential properties by emphasizing the public advantages derived from the creation of 8000 new employment opportunities inside the five biotechnology parks, alongside the provision of diverse amenities. After a span of sixteen years, the project has yielded a meager quantity of less than 1500 additional employment opportunities. The plan did not address the process by which the displaced inhabitants would have the opportunity to return. Instead, it only focused on facilitating their departure from the area to accommodate the powerbrokers' envisioned demographic changes, which they believed would bring about a revitalization of the region (Gomez, 2012).

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.mariselabgomez.com/tag/annie-e-casey-foundation/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.mariselabgomez.com/tag/middle-east-baltimore/>

### **5.3. A Dynamic Performance Governance Analysis of Social Exclusion in Middle East Neighborhood**

To develop and carry out a sustainable policy for the redevelopment of the Middle East neighborhood and advance the goal of social inclusion, it is imperative for performance governance to prioritize outcome indicators. These indicators should encompass various aspects, including the quality of life experienced by residents, the level of active citizenship, and the perception of the neighborhood's image. Additionally, employment opportunities, rates of school dropout, and other relevant factors should also be considered. The research findings reveal that the final outcome is a change in social inclusion, which encompasses the combined effects of collaborative efforts in implementing joint initiative policies. The achievement of the ultimate goal is heavily influenced by the change in the quality of life, specifically an intermediate outcome as well as the neighborhood image, together with the transformation in dominant culture and values.

The Dynamic Performance Governance chart is designed to accurately represent the present scenario in the Middle East region as well as the potential role of collaboration in fostering social inclusion. This representation is based on interviews and secondary sources of information that have been collected and analyzed. The chart offers a comprehensive and synthesized perspective on the impact of policies implemented to address the specific issue at hand.

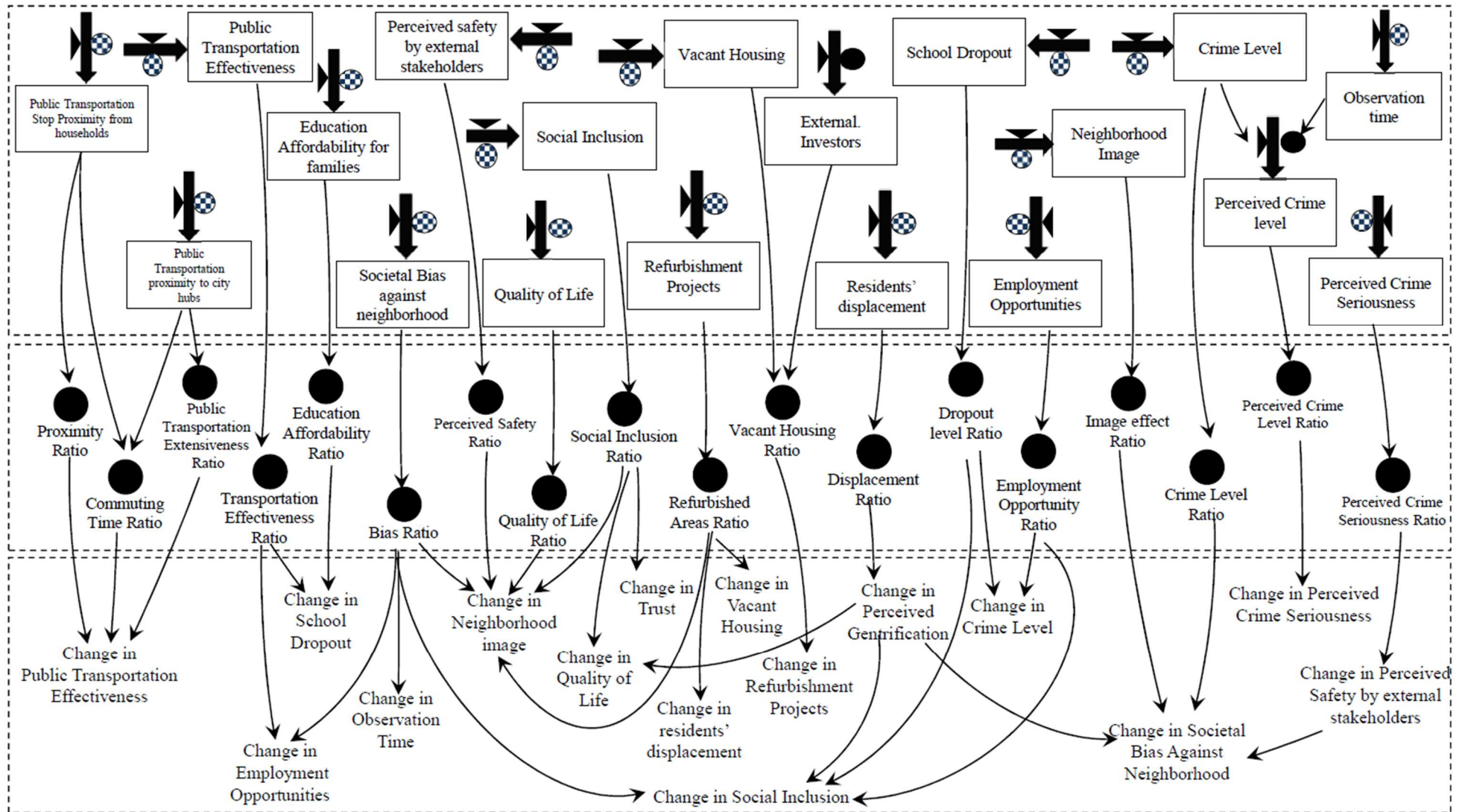
The DPG chart shown in this study integrates aggregate measurements to illustrate the interconnectedness among different stakeholders within the community, in response to the pervasive issues of social exclusion and marginalization. Furthermore, the objective is to illustrate the comprehensive causal connections between various aspects that impact the performance of an organization across a specific period of time. Although the analysis of local government has been extensively studied, the investigation of local area governance is a more recent subject of academic research. The focus of this specific discipline requires prioritization of the multi-organizational sphere, whereby the use of performance measurement and management techniques is expected to enhance coordination and collaboration in pursuit of the intended outcomes. This purpose specifically focuses on improving social inclusion in peripheral city neighborhoods.

The DPG depicted in Figure 19 below illustrates many generic structures that represent cause-and-effect relationships influencing social inclusion. Hence, there exist certain parallels between the current DPG and the one depicted in the preceding chapter, which frames the reality of the San Filippo Neri neighborhood. These parallels are related to the

effectiveness of public transportation and are influenced by two key factors: the proximity of public transportation stops to households and the proximity of public transportation to city hubs. These factors have a direct impact on employment opportunities and school dropout rates. Additionally, the affordability of education for families also plays a role in influencing school dropout rates. Another component that contributes to the formation of social inclusion is the societal bias towards neighborhoods and its correlation with crime rates, perceived crime rates, and perceived seriousness. Additional similarities can be observed in the context of the collaborative process among various stakeholders, as well as the pervasiveness and effectiveness of collaborative projects.

However, despite the numerous parallels, there exist distinct processes that give rise to social exclusion, necessitating focused attention. These factors, along with the aforementioned generic structures, are depicted in the DPG chart presented below.







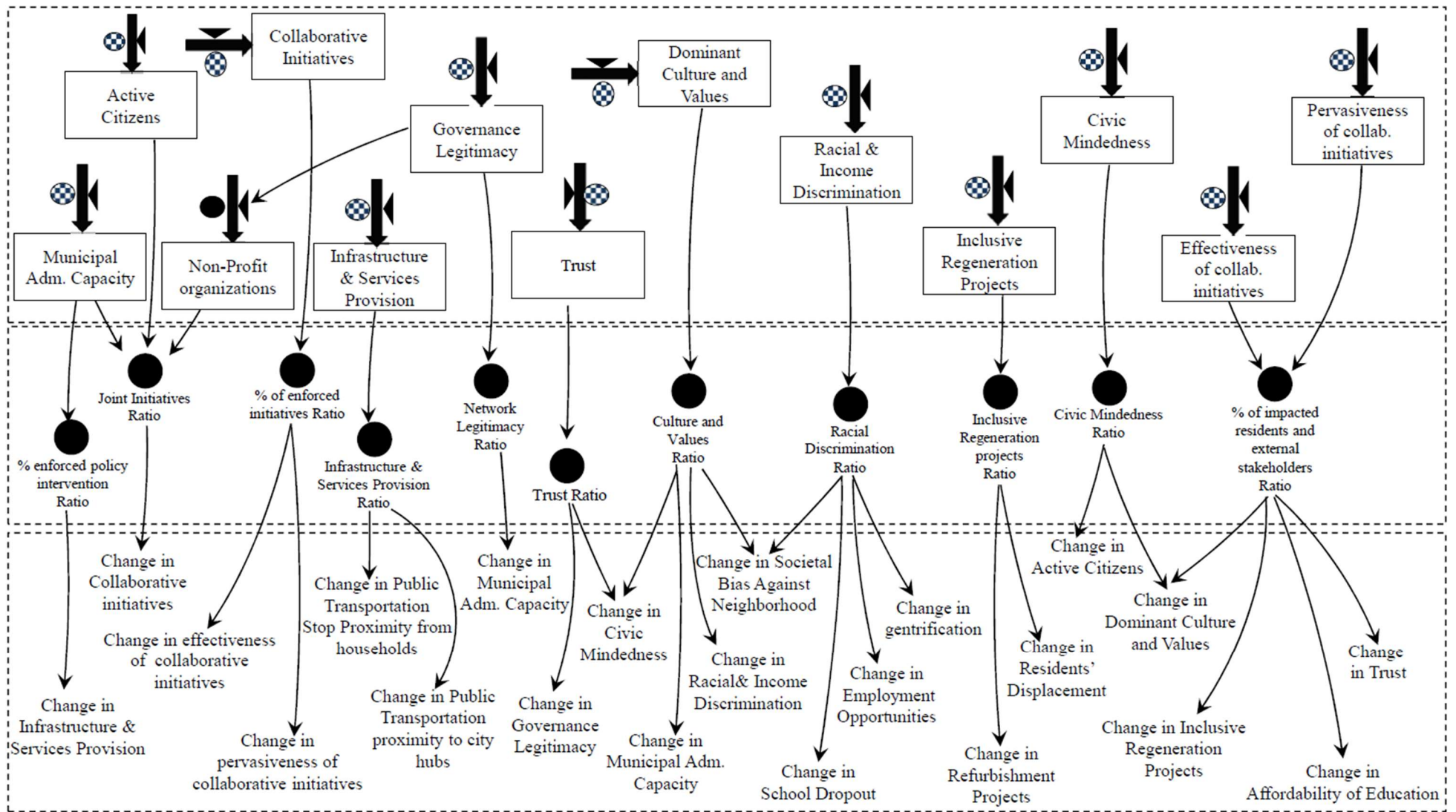


Figure 19 (A&B). A Dynamic Performance Governance Chart of the Middle East neighborhood (Source: Created by the researcher using Microsoft® PowerPoint Slide Presentation Software)

The aforementioned factors that contribute to the enhancement or reduction of social exclusion are intricately linked to various aspects within the field of education, employment opportunities, level of crime, social biases held by external actors towards the neighborhood, the overall quality of life experienced by residents, and the neighborhood image. Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that the field of social inclusion within the Middle East neighborhood is influenced by a variety of additional factors. Among these factors, one cannot overlook the significant impact generated by the presence of vacant housing units, which in turn leads to urban blight. The implementation of refurbishment projects within the neighborhood by external stakeholders has resulted in a persistent and recurrent phenomenon of displacement among long-standing residents who have resided in the area for decades. This phenomenon, characterized by the consistent displacing of individuals from their homes, has raised concerns regarding the social and economic consequences of such initiatives. The refurbishment projects, undertaken by external stakeholders, have undoubtedly aimed to revitalize and enhance the image of the neighborhood. However, the unintended consequence of these efforts has been the displacement of residents who have established deep-rooted connections and a sense of belonging within the community over the course of several decades. This displacement, occurring as a direct result of the implemented refurbishments, has had profound implications for the affected individuals and the fabric of the neighborhood as a whole. The displacement of long-standing residents engenders a multitude of challenges. Firstly, it disrupts the social networks and support systems that individuals have cultivated over time, severing valuable connections and changing the social fabric of the community. Moreover, it catalyzed the exacerbation of the gentrification phenomenon, thereby intensifying the process of socio-economic restructuring within the affected neighborhood and therefore increasing social exclusion patterns. Such processes are portrayed by the stocks 'Vacant Housing' and 'External Investors' which impact the end result 'Change in Refurbishment Projects', which build up or deploy the connected stock, that through the performance driver 'Refurbished Areas Ratio' (gauged as a ratio between the actual level and the given benchmark that external investors have set) impact on three outcomes, i.e., 'Change in residents' displacement', 'Change in Neighborhood Image', and 'Change in Vacant Housing'. The first outcome leads to an increase or decrease of the stock 'Residents' Displacement' which impacts the result 'Change in Perceived Gentrification' and therefore to the final outcome 'Change in Social Inclusion'.

One additional factor that significantly impacts the ultimate outcome under consideration pertains to the recurrent racial discrimination encountered by African-American residents.

This destructive phenomenon manifests in various ways, exerting adverse impacts on job opportunities, educational achievements, and engendering social biases directed toward the communities in which people live. More specifically, it is not uncommon for residents to encounter cases of discrimination, which can manifest in various domains of life. For instance, during the process of job application, individuals may find themselves subjected to prejudiced treatment based on their ethnic origin. Similarly, within educational settings, students belonging to certain ethnicities may face marginalization and exclusion, thereby impeding their academic progress and overall well-being. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the historical facts pertaining to Baltimore serve as a compelling example of how racial discrimination can significantly amplify the adverse prejudices harbored by other people about the neighborhood. One example that can be cited is the phenomenon commonly referred to as 'redlining' and the 'black butterfly'. These terms encapsulate discriminatory practices that have historically been employed in various contexts, particularly in the United States, to perpetuate systemic inequalities and marginalize certain communities based on race and socioeconomic status. In the late 1930s, the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) developed "residential security maps" for more than 200 communities across the United States. These maps were a component of the federal government's initiative aimed at providing housing and mortgage assistance. The maps analyzed the degree of lending risk associated with mortgages (as well as related services like homeowners' insurance) across different neighborhoods in each city. The analysis utilized a color-coded scale ranging from Green (representing the most desirable areas) to Blue, Yellow, and Red (indicating hazardous areas). The assessment of each neighborhood was based on several criteria, including the condition and maintenance of the housing as well as the average income level within the community. The racial and ethnic composition of a neighborhood had a crucial role, particularly in determining its classification. The presence of African American citizens or other ethnic groups considered "undesirable," such as Mexicans, Italians, or Jews, had a profoundly detrimental effect on the neighborhood's categorization. Specifically, nearly all neighborhoods with a predominately African-American population were assigned yellow or red grades. Despite the explicit prohibition of utilizing these maps following the enactment of the Fair Housing Act in 1968, the enduring impact of these maps on the disinvestment patterns in minority communities has significantly influenced the urban landscape of the United States<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/a2d055fecc4c4b259f10f19dd375e546>

This process is portrayed in part B of the DPG shown in Figure 19 by the stock ‘Racial Discrimination’ whose net flow is affected by the stock ‘Dominant Culture and Values’. The outcomes impacted by the stock portraying racial discrimination are ‘Change in Societal Bias Against Neighborhood’, ‘Change in School Dropout’, ‘Change in Employment Opportunities’, and ‘Change in Gentrification’.

The last significant difference that arises between the San Filippo Neri DPG chart and the Middle East neighborhood pertains to the effectiveness and pervasiveness of collaborative initiatives that may be employed to promote inclusive regeneration projects, mitigate the displacement of residents, and, consequently, the phenomenon of gentrification. The active engagement of residents in the design and implementation of urban redevelopment plans has been widely recognized as a crucial factor in promoting social inclusion within urban communities. By actively involving residents in the decision-making processes, urban redevelopment initiatives can effectively address the diverse needs and expectations of the local population, while also catering to the demands of external investors. This inclusive approach ensures that the interests and concerns of all stakeholders are taken into account, fostering a sense of responsibility and empowerment among residents. Consequently, the collaborative efforts between residents and external investors result in the creation of urban spaces that are not only economically viable but also socially cohesive, thereby contributing to the overall well-being and inclusion of the community.

#### **5.4. Framing the cause-and-effect relationships of the Middle East neighborhood through a Causal Loop Diagram**

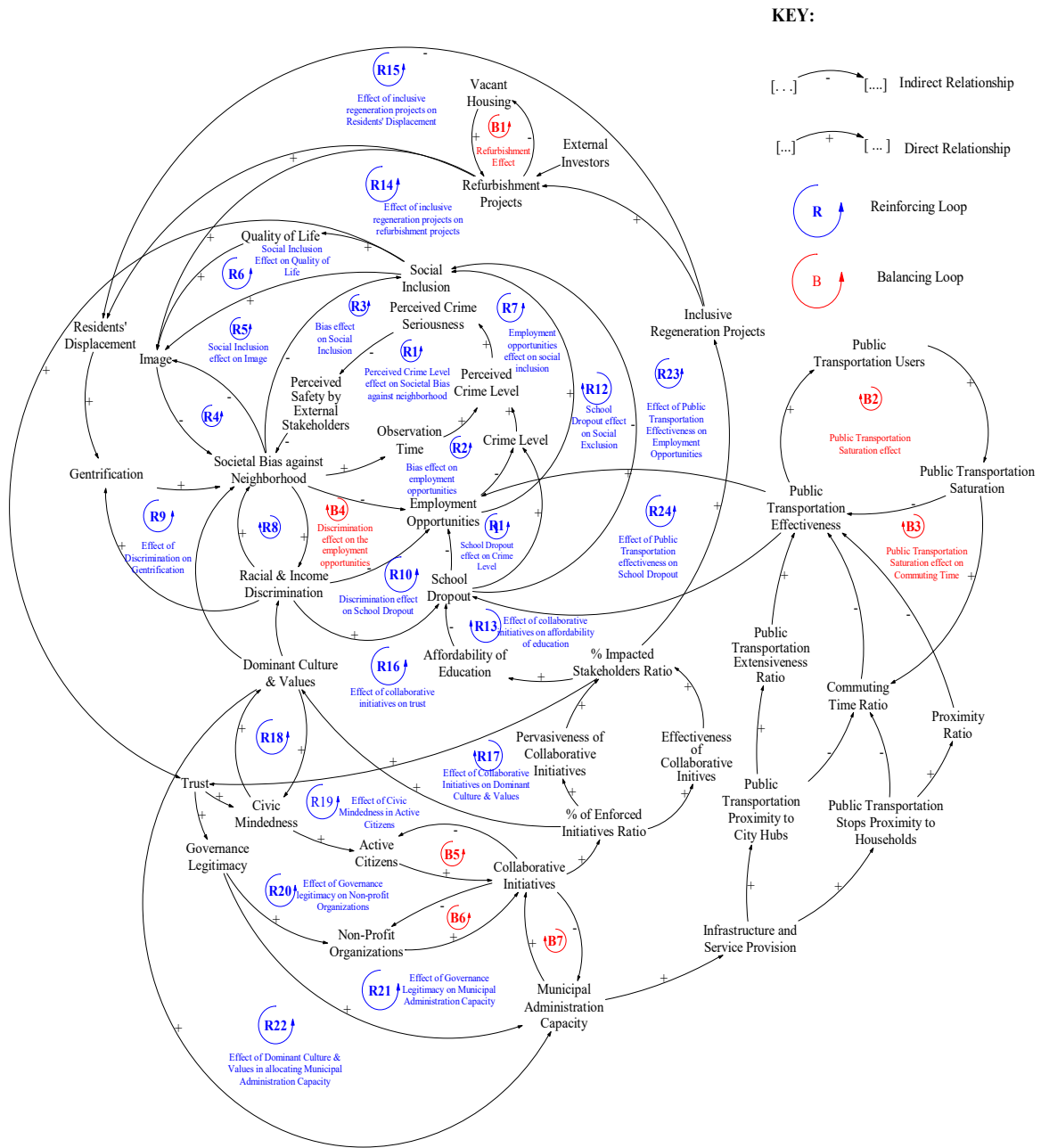


Figure 20. A Causal Loop Diagram portraying the causal relationship of the social exclusion phenomenon in the Middle East Neighborhood (Source: Created by the researcher using Vensim ® PLE 8.2.1.)

Figure 20 depicts a causal loop diagram illustrating the primary causal relationships that drive the phenomenon of social exclusion in the Middle East Neighborhood of Baltimore. Certain behaviors exhibit similarities to those discussed in the preceding chapter. As for the San Filippo Neri case study, a significant factor contributing to social exclusion in the Middle East neighborhood is the social bias held by external actors toward the neighborhood and its residents. As crime rates rise, so does the perceived neighborhood crime level. This increases the perception of crime seriousness, resulting in decreased perceived area safety by external stakeholders. As a result, societal bias against the neighborhood and its residents has increased. This phenomenon is depicted by the reinforcing loop **R1 (Perceived crime level effect on societal bias against the neighborhood)**, which demonstrates the impact of perceived crime level on societal bias against the neighborhood.

Such bias hinders the possibility of finding good employment opportunities that in turn impact the crime level, indeed, this scenario increases the probability of unemployed individuals engaging in criminal activities such as robbery or drug trafficking, as well as becoming involved in organized crime. Consequently, it also contributes to a higher level of social bias as portrayed in the reinforcing loop **R2 (Bias effect on employment opportunities)**. Furthermore, there is a direct correlation between the availability of employment opportunities and the level of social inclusion, as evidenced by the loop **R7**.

Moreover, a significant societal bias against the neighborhood contributed to the worsening of the social exclusion phenomenon. Consequently, this led to a decline in the neighborhood's image, further reinforcing the negative bias against it. The process in question is depicted by the reinforcing loops **R3 (bias effect on social inclusion)**, **R4**, and **R5 (social inclusion effect on image)**. A lack of social inclusion is associated with a decreased quality of life for residents, resulting in a diminished overall image. The process depicted in the reinforcing loop **R6 (Social Inclusion effect on Quality of Life)**, which examines the impact of social inclusion on quality of life, contributes to the exacerbation of societal prejudice against the neighborhood.

One underlying factor that contributes to this bias is the presence of racial and income discrimination perpetrated by external stakeholders against the residents of the neighborhood. The level of discrimination experienced by the residents directly influences the extent of bias, which subsequently exacerbates the discrimination faced by the residents. The process in question is depicted by the reinforcing loop **R8**.

The issue of racial and income discrimination has significant implications for three key phenomena. Firstly, the possibility for residents to secure good employment is shown by reinforcing loop **R9 (Discrimination effect on employment opportunities)**. This loop

underscores the adverse impact of discriminatory practices on the ability of individuals to access and attain satisfactory job prospects within their community. Secondly, the willingness of students to continue their educational path - reinforcing loop **R10 (Discrimination effect on School Dropout)**. This particular loop sheds light on the detrimental consequences of discrimination on the motivation and willingness of students to persist in their educational pursuits, potentially leading to increased dropout rates and hindering their overall academic progress. Lastly, it is essential to address the issue of gentrification, a complex phenomenon that is influenced by various factors, including discrimination, as portrayed in the reinforcing loop **R11 (Effect of discrimination on gentrification)**. This loop elucidates the profound impact of discriminatory practices on the process of gentrification, wherein marginalized communities may be disproportionately affected, leading to displacement and the transformation of neighborhoods. The aforementioned phenomenon, which has garnered significant attention, is commonly referred to as the "black butterfly" by Professor Lawrence Brown of Morgan State University. It refers to the depiction of the spatial configuration of racially segregated African American communities that extend radially across the eastern and western sectors of the urban landscape shown in Figure 21 below.

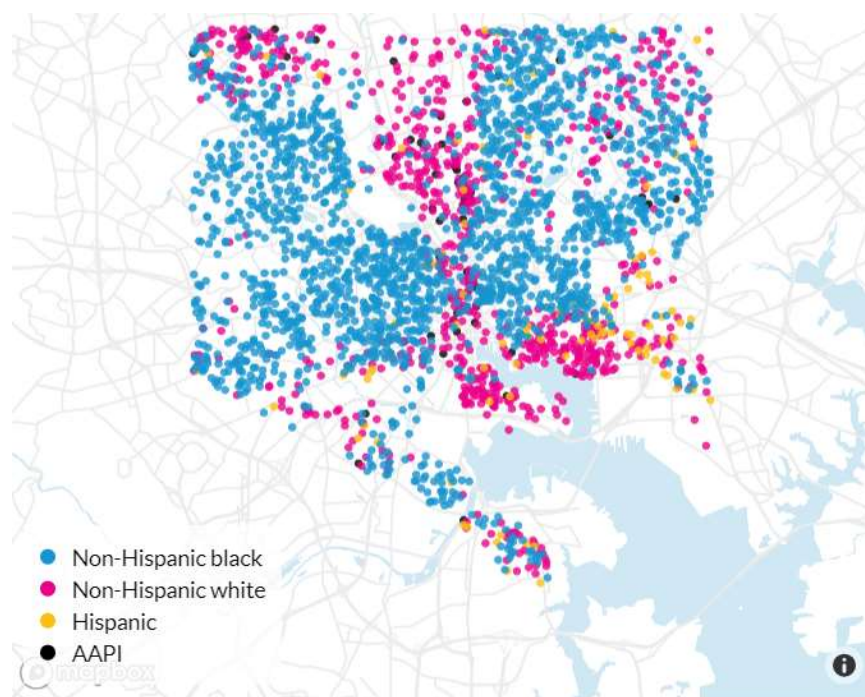


Figure 21. Black Butterfly in Baltimore (Source: 2012-16 American Community Survey Data).

Retrieved from: <https://apps.urban.org/features/baltimore-investment-flows/#:~:text=Race%20in%20Baltimore&text=It%20is%20a%20pattern%20Morgan,a%20community's%20health%20and%20>

The school dropout, similar to the San Filippo Neri neighborhood in Palermo, is a driving force impacting two phenomena that extend beyond the education field and permeate into various societal dynamics phenomena. Firstly, it affects crime level, as shown in the



reinforcing loop **R12 (School Dropout effect on Crime level)**. This loop elucidates the intricate relationship between educational attainment and criminal activities within the neighborhood. It is widely acknowledged that individuals who prematurely terminate their education are more susceptible to engaging in illicit behaviors, thereby contributing to an escalation in the crime rate. This reinforcing loop highlights the cyclical nature of this phenomenon. Secondly, the school dropout effect on social inclusion, as represented by the reinforcing loop **R13 (School dropout effect on Social Inclusion)**, sheds light on the profound impact that educational attainment has on the overall social fabric of the community. The absence of a comprehensive education not only hinders individuals from acquiring essential skills and knowledge but also impedes their ability to actively participate in social and economic spheres. Consequently, this lack of social inclusion perpetuates a vicious cycle, as individuals who experience marginalization due to their educational background are more likely to face additional barriers to accessing opportunities and resources, exacerbating the issue of school dropout.

To tackle social exclusion in the Middle East neighborhood, collaborative initiatives should be pursued to address the key factors analyzed, i.e., school dropout, employment opportunities, crime levels, and societal biases. By identifying these overlapping issues, it is possible to develop a series of interconnected projects that can effectively address multiple problems at the same time. The influence of social inclusion on trust levels towards governments and non-profit organizations is an important factor to take into account

Considering the impact of social inclusion on the levels of trust displayed by residents and other stakeholders towards governments and non-profit organizations is an important factor that requires thoughtful consideration. Based on the interviews and extensive literature in the field, it is evident that there exists a notable correlation between residents and organizations. This correlation leads to active participation, as demonstrated by the reinforcing loop **R19 (Effect of civic mindedness in active citizens)**, which highlights the impact of civic mindedness on citizen engagement. This active participation from local communities not only enhances the legitimacy of non-profit organizations but also strengthens the capacity of municipal administration. The process is depicted through two reinforcing loops, namely **R20 (Effect of Governance Legitimacy on Non-profit Organizations)** and **R21 (effect of Governance Legitimacy on Municipal Administration Capacity)**. R20 represents the impact of Governance Legitimacy on Non-profit organizations, while R21 represents the influence of Governance Legitimacy on Municipal Administration Capacity, which in turn affects the Joint Initiatives Ratio. Another important factor to take into account when investigating trust is its influence



on civic-mindedness. As levels of trust rise, there is a corresponding increase in civic-mindedness, leading to a higher number of citizens who are actively engaged in the neighborhood. The level of engagement from active citizens, non-profit organizations, and municipal administration directly correlates with the number of collaborative initiatives and, as a result, the proportion of initiatives that are effectively executed increases. The pervasiveness and effectiveness of collaborative initiatives are enhanced with increased enforcement and adherence to these initiatives. The extent of impact can be quantified by determining the percentage of stakeholders affected, which encompasses residents, external actors such as public and private sector organizations, citizens, and non-profit organizations. Collaborative initiatives can be directed towards the implementation of an inclusive refurbishment project. As previously discussed in the preceding sections of this chapter, the neighborhood has undergone significant changes as a result of the refurbishment project initiated by the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. The main goal of this project was to establish a biotechnology hub within the area. The idea of this initiative was to draw in scientists and entrepreneurs from different countries, with the overarching aim of revitalizing the urban landscape of a predominantly working-class African-American neighborhood. Nevertheless, despite the positive impact on the neighborhood's image, as evidenced by the reinforcing loop **R14 (Effect of refurbishment projects on the image)**, this change has also resulted in certain drawbacks. One of these issues is the displacement of numerous families residing in the area, thereby contributing to an increase in the gentrification phenomenon. By implementing collaborative initiatives that specifically target displacement, it becomes feasible to mitigate the effects of gentrification and subsequently enhance social inclusion within the neighborhood. These initiatives can be effectively implemented by engaging in co-design, co-planning, and co-creation processes for the regeneration projects in the area. This approach involves actively involving residents, internal stakeholders, and external investors in the decision-making and implementation processes. The process of how inclusive regeneration projects affect residents' displacement is illustrated by the reinforcing loop **R15 (Effect of inclusive regeneration projects on residents' displacement)**.

One limit to growth associated with refurbishment projects is the availability of vacant housing units in the neighborhood. The availability of vacant housing is limited, which means that refurbishment projects targeting these sites cannot be endless. Therefore, the balancing loop B1 (refurbishment effect) illustrates this particular constraint.

Two additional links were not highlighted in the CLD, which pertain to the adverse effects of vacant housing on the neighborhood's image and perceived safety.

The implementation of these initiatives leads to a significant improvement in the level of trust, as evidenced by the reinforcing loop **R16 (Effect of Collaborative Initiatives on Trust)**. Consequently, there is also an increase in civic mindedness. Concurrently, the rise in civic-mindedness plays a pivotal role in the transformation of the dominant culture and values, resulting in a beneficial impact on civic-mindedness. The behavior in question is illustrated by the reinforcing loop **R25**. The influence of dominant culture and values extends beyond civic mindedness and also affects the capacity of municipal administration. The establishment of this causal relationship is crucial in determining the capacity allocated to municipal administration. The occurrence of a cultural transition can have a positive influence on the level of attention that local public sector organizations devote to the needs of these neighborhoods. The prevailing pattern is associated with the strategic implementation of regeneration initiatives that seek to attract middle and high-income families to revitalize neighborhoods, thereby increasing tax revenues. This particular form of urban planning contributes to social exclusion by perpetuating income inequalities and forcing low-income families to relocate outside of their neighborhoods. Consequently, it results in a complete disregard for their needs and perspectives within the community, ultimately exacerbating the pattern of gentrification. The reinforcing loop **R22 (Effect of dominant culture and values in allocating municipal administration capacity)** illustrates the impact of dominant culture and values on the allocation of municipal administration capacity. The reinforcing loops **R23 (Effect of Public Transportation Effectiveness on employment opportunities)** and **R24 (Effect of Public Transportation Effectiveness on School Dropout)** illustrate the impact of two factors, namely the proximity of public transportation stops to households and the proximity of public transportation to city hubs, on the overall effectiveness of public transportation. These factors are crucial in determining the influence of public transportation on employment opportunities and rates of school dropout. Proximity to urban centers and public transportation hubs directly correlates with increased employment opportunities for residents. Residents can freely navigate the city and easily find diverse employment prospects due to constant connections. Furthermore, the proximity to urban centers and transportation hubs also plays a significant role in reducing the incidence of school dropout. Students' punctuality in arriving at school has a positive impact on their academic performance. The Middle East neighborhood has limited public transportation and due to the unsafety conditions, makes it difficult for residents to access employment opportunities and increases the likelihood of school dropout.

The two balancing loops, **B2 (Public Transportation saturation effect)** and **B3 (Public transportation saturation effect on commuting time)** illustrate the main limits on the

growth of public transportation effectiveness, namely the saturation effects on both the capacity of the system and the commuting time. These loops highlight the factors that hinder the further improvement and expansion of public transportation services' effectiveness without other investments. In more detail, an improvement in the effectiveness of public transportation systems can result in a subsequent rise in the number of users opting for this mode of transport. Consequently, this surge in demand may lead to a reduction in the availability of seating capacity within public transportation vehicles, thereby diminishing the overall effectiveness of the system. Simultaneously, a decrease in the availability of seats within public transportation systems could potentially result in longer commuting times, thereby having a negative effect on the overall effectiveness of the public transportation system.

Furthermore, these initiatives exert a beneficial impact on the existing culture and values that define the local community and the broader city, as illustrated in the reinforcing loop **R17 (Impact of Collaborative Initiatives on Dominant Culture & Values)**.

The pervasiveness and effectiveness of collaborative initiatives play a significant role also in enhancing the affordability of education, thereby resulting in a decrease in the rates of students leaving school prematurely. The relationship between the affordability of education and school dropout is illustrated in reinforcing loop **R18 (Effect of collaborative initiatives on affordability Education)**. This loop emphasizes the influence of education affordability on the likelihood of students dropping out of school.

It is important to recognize that the reinforcing loops associated with collaborative initiatives do not have unlimited growth. Some constraints for non-profit organizations, municipal administrations, and active citizens are the limited time, personnel, financial resources, and skills available to devote to these initiatives. This phenomenon can be seen by the balancing feedback loops **B4, B5, and B6**.

### **5.5. Stakeholder Analysis**

Around the phenomenon of social exclusion in the Middle East neighborhood there is a net of stakeholders that have a crucial role in shaping such a problem

Figures 22 and 23 depict circles that symbolize distinct levels of stakeholder relevance in relation to the issue of social exclusion. The network process, whether it is informally or formally established, involves stakeholders with different roles, which can be captured by using a stakeholder network map (Omong, 2021). The stakeholders located in the inner

circles of the network possess greater significance, influence, and dedication compared to those situated in the outer circles.

The necessity for two stakeholders' maps arises from the adverse effects of the neighborhood's refurbishment project on the residents' well-being and the subsequent rise in social exclusion. This is illustrated in Figure 22. It is important to point out that the goal of this refurbishment project was to revitalize the area by establishing a biotech center, with the aim of attracting new residents with middle to high incomes and enhancing the general image of the neighborhood. In response to the refurbishment project's impact, a separate network was established to speak out against it. This network was primarily led by non-profit organizations and residents (see Figure 23) which tried to counteract the negative effect of such project.

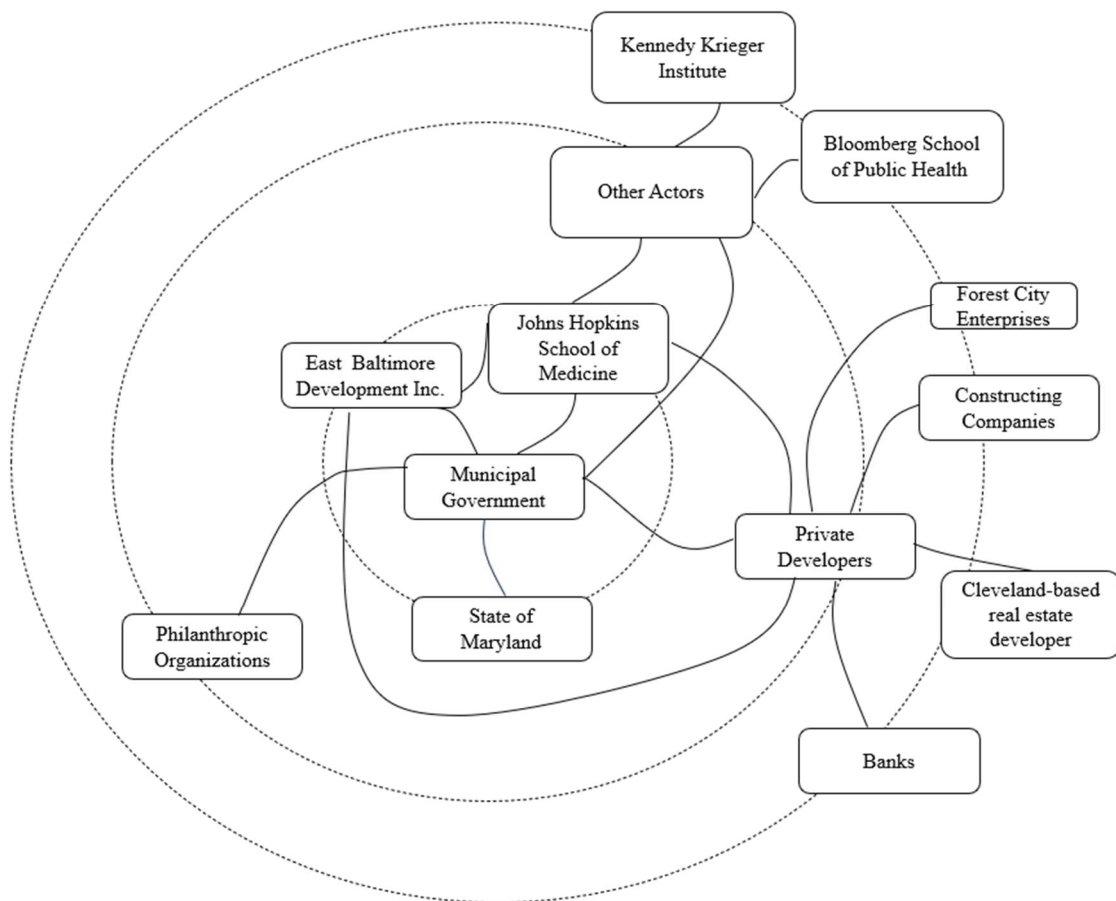


Figure 22. Stakeholders Network Map of the refurbishment project implemented in the Middle East Neighborhood (Author Conceptualization, created with Microsoft PowerPoint).

Around the phenomenon of social exclusion in the Middle East neighborhood there is a net of stakeholders that have a crucial role in shaping such a problem.

Figure 22 illustrates the key stakeholders engaged in the implementation of the Johns Hopkins Biotech Park. These stakeholders include the State of Maryland, Baltimore City, and Forest City Enterprises, a real estate developer headquartered in Cleveland. The state of Maryland and the city of Baltimore have allocated \$26.5 million and \$173.5 million, respectively, towards the project. The funds were mainly used for demolishing existing structures and building essential infrastructure. The East Baltimore Development Inc, a non-profit organization overseeing the project's public-private partnership, has implemented a strategy to demolish the entire neighborhood (Rothstein, 2008)<sup>10</sup>. This plan involved relocating the current residents by utilizing the city's authority. Subsequently, the organization aimed to construct 2,400 units of mixed income housing, encompassing subsidized, mid-priced, and market-rate facilities, in place of the existing homes (Rothstein, 2008).

In an article published by The New York Times, Scott Levitan, the senior vice president of Forest City, expressed his vision, stating, "Hopefully, this is the last time we'll have to demolish a neighborhood in order to save it" (Meyer, 2008)<sup>11</sup>. This comment fails to acknowledge the practical implications of urban development practices implemented in this way. It is indisputable that the significant investment in East Baltimore will introduce crucial components to the community that have been lacking for an extended period (Rothstein, 2008). These elements include employment opportunities, new schools, and a sustainable tax revenue source. Nevertheless, it is a legitimate observation that a significant number of individuals currently residing in the Middle East have faced financial constraints that prevent them from affording housing in the neighborhood's transformation. This is the case even when considering the relocation packages offered, which are of unparalleled worth, and the mortgage loans managed by EBDI. The redevelopment project of the Johns Hopkins Biotech Park falls short of reflecting the values professed by its planners due to the lack of meaningful engagement between Johns Hopkins, EBDI, and the East Baltimore Community as equal partners throughout the planning process and initial construction phases (Rothstein, 2008). Prior to the initiation of the initial phase of demolition for the establishment of the Biotech Park, Johns Hopkins University had already been actively seeking new real estate. Dr. Edward Miller, the CEO of Johns Hopkins Hospital, openly admits in an article published in the New York Times that he has acquired unoccupied residential properties in

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<sup>10</sup> Rothstein, A., (2008). Rebuilding the Middle East (Neighborhood in Baltimore), Next City, August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Retrieved from: <https://nextcity.org/urbanist-news/rebuilding-the-middle-east-neighborhood-in-baltimore>

<sup>11</sup> Meyer, E. L., (2008). Building a Technology Park in Baltimore by Rehabilitating a Neighborhood. The New York Times, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/06/realestate/commercial/06balt.html>

East Baltimore, expressing a forward-thinking perspective (Rothstein, 2008). There are those who perceive this practice as having worsened the underlying issue of urban decay, which is precisely the problem that the institution aims to tackle through redevelopment (Rothstein, 2008). The act of acquiring vacant rowhouses and allowing them to deteriorate has contributed to the further decline in property value. Furthermore, during the initial stages of project planning, there was a lack of effort to engage the local community. Consequently, when the project was eventually disclosed to residents of the Middle East in 2002, it had already been finalized without their input or consideration (Rothstein, 2008).

Within the local African-American community, there exists a prevalent sentiment of resentment and distrust towards the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, stemming from its perceived historical involvement in medical research conducted within the community. In the past, there was a failure to adequately inform African Americans residents who were encouraged to reside in homes containing toxic lead paint as part of a study aimed at improving strategies to mitigate the harmful impact of this paint on children. Hopkins has also faced criticism from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) due to a study conducted in 2000. In this study, researchers distributed compost composed of human and industrial waste onto the yards of approximately eleven residents in East Baltimore. The aim of this study was to address the issue of lead paint poisoning (Rothstein, 2008).

In light of the limited involvement of the community, activists in the Middle East promptly organized themselves into a grassroots advocacy group known as the Save Middle East Action Committee (SMEAC). The network that has been established is depicted in Figure 23 below.

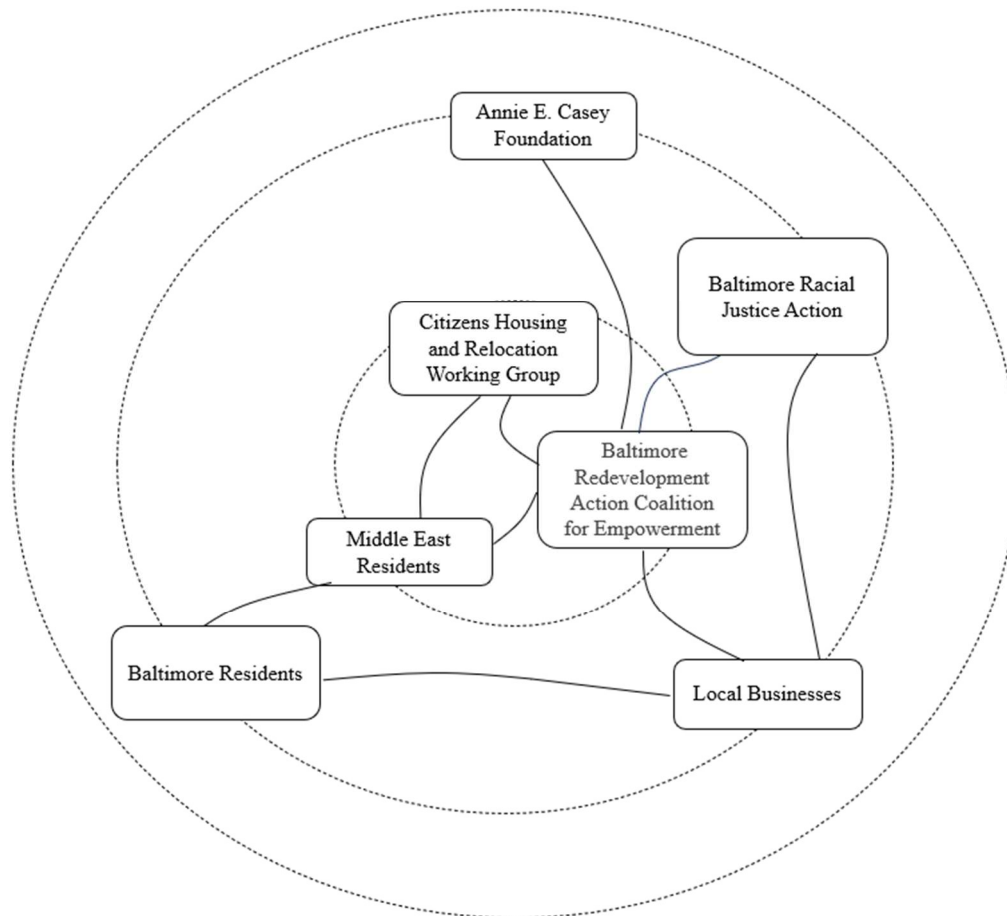


Figure 23. Stakeholders Network Map of those actors fighting against the negative impacts of the refurbishment project implemented in the Middle East Neighborhood (Author Conceptualization, created with Microsoft PowerPoint).

The members of SMEAC expressed their concern that EBDI did not adequately consider the needs and perspectives of the Middle East residents who would be affected by the redevelopment. This includes those who would lose their homes, experience changes in the community, or be impacted by the demolition process. SMEAC was established with the purpose of ensuring that the voices of residents were heard and their needs were taken into account throughout the entire redevelopment process.

Several Middle East residents discovered that they were relocated from the news (Malcom, 2021), Charlotte Johnson, a resident in the neighborhood stated: “The way we found out about it, we read it in the paper. We weren’t even notified, that’s sad part about it... reading about it in the [newspaper] that eminent domain had been imposed on us and they were taking our homes... They don’t even have enough respect for us to even notify us”. Another resident, Helen Rose stated “An then I had called [the authorities] and told them that the big trucks and everything by the vibration was pulling my walls and everything apart and I said ‘What’s going on?’ and they said ‘Don’t worry about it until we tell you. Don’t worry about it,’”. Gresham said “I didn’t read it in the paper, I didn’t get a letter, I didn’t get any phone calls — all I knew was that they were acquiring my property,” he said. “You would not have

known it at all. They had no formal way of letting you know that your property was being acquired and you were going to have to move.” He only knew that his property was going to be acquired through one of the SMEAC organizer (Malcom, 2021)<sup>12</sup>.

The initial purpose of SMEAC was centered around the concept of making residents "whole" by providing them with a new home in a stable neighborhood. Despite the disbandment of SMEAC in 2011, the EBDI project continues to be in progress. The work of ensuring that residents' voices are heard in the redevelopment process has been carried on by newly established organizations such as the Citizens Housing and Relocation Working Group (CHRWG) and the Baltimore Redevelopment Action Coalition for Empowerment (BRACE) (Malcom, 2021).

Figure 23 illustrates the primary connections and relevant positions of the various stakeholders engaged in combating the displacement of residents and addressing social exclusion. Donald Gresham, the president of the Baltimore Redevelopment Action Coalition for Empowerment (BRACE), has affirmed that “There were many opportunities to do the right thing, to make a difference for those families whose lives will never be the same. The pain and the horror of the whole process, of being relocated and displaced, of gentrified community — you can’t imagine the pain that goes through your mind.”<sup>13</sup> To boost the collective memory on what happened in the neighborhood it was implemented a collaborative initiative between SMEAC and Art on Purpose, called Middle East Baltimore Stories<sup>14</sup>, aimed at fostering unity and engagement through the medium of art, with a particular focus on addressing pertinent issues and promoting thought-provoking ideas. Elizabeth Barbush, who was the program director of a nonprofit organization based in Baltimore at the time, captured photographs of the Middle East neighborhood and conducted interviews with its inhabitants. Her noteworthy contributions are showcased in a book that received financial support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a charitable organization focused on the well-being of children and a partner of the EBDI (Malcom, 2021).

According to Gresham, SMEAC had to engage in a continuous struggle, working tirelessly day and night, in order to ensure safe demolition practices. The book "Middle East Baltimore Stories" documents the consequences of demolition procedures in the region. These procedures resulted in property damage and rat infestations, as well as psychological stress that manifested in the form of heightened crime rates and physical health issues such as

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<sup>12</sup> All Courtesy of Elizabeth Barbush. Retrieved from: <https://www.jhunewsletter.com/article/2021/05/uprooted-and-displaced-how-the-east-baltimore-development-initiative-gentrified-middle-east>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.jhunewsletter.com/article/2021/05/uprooted-and-displaced-how-the-east-baltimore-development-initiative-gentrified-middle-east>

<sup>14</sup> <https://bethbarbush.com/stories/middle-east-baltimore/>



asthma and lead poisoning. Lead poisoning has been a persistent issue among disadvantaged and African American children in Baltimore. It is recognized for its detrimental effects on cognitive abilities, propensity for aggression, and exacerbation of the poverty cycle, which is perpetuated by racially discriminatory practices such as redlining.

## CHAPTER 6

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The two case studies presented in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 offer valuable insights into the experiences of social exclusion among residents living in peripheral city neighborhoods. Certain basic root causes of these complex issues are interrelated with other challenges, such as high school dropout rates, societal prejudices, income and racial discrimination, inadequate public transportation systems, elevated crime rates, insufficient infrastructure and service provision, limited accessibility, drug abuse, and numerous additional factors. In the Middle East neighborhood, significant attention was dedicated to examining the potential impact of inadequate redevelopment projects on the issue under investigation. The importance of collaborative governance in shaping this phenomenon was also emphasized. By engaging non-profit organizations, social enterprises, religious-based organizations, proactive citizens, as well as public and private sector organizations, it may be feasible to effectively address the aforementioned issue, while also addressing the interrelated set of problems. The collaborative processes within urban neighborhoods are founded upon the principles of active citizenship. Bianchi (2021; 2022) argues that an active citizenship mode in collaborative governance is crucial to create, foster and sustain community value outcomes. The two neighborhoods comprise a wide range of stakeholders who play vital roles in transforming the neighborhood. Hence, categorize stakeholders by adopting a stakeholder network map may enables the effective distribution of roles, duties and actions. Collaborative governance networks are of utmost importance in enabling collective intervention among diverse groups of stakeholders. This aspect holds significant weight due to the operational mechanism of these networks, which involves a synergistic approach resulting in the achievement of desired outcomes (Vigoda, 2002: 527-534).

Nevertheless, there exist multiple potential challenges that may have an impact on the stakeholders' network. The San Filippo Neri neighborhood as well as the Middle East neighborhood encounter a significant challenge regarding the lack of an established structure for conducting network interventions. The existence of delays in the establishment of formal support can be attributed to the reliance on individual efforts for the majority of support provided by the municipality. Consequently, a lack in motivation and trust among the stakeholders is observed. Moreover, it was reported a limited mechanism of power sharing and the allocation of responsibilities. Therefore, to actually produce a sustainable change, it is crucial to formalize the collaborative network setting through a well-defined framework, where all different roles, duties and rights are identified. While considering network

governance structures there are additional problems that pertain to the political and administrative resistance to both collaborative settings and holistic transformation that should be taken into account. In the first scenario, resistance may arise from a reluctance to partially delegate the power held by public sector organizations or due to bureaucratic factors. The second form of resistance can arise from a narrow-minded perspective and a focus on an output-oriented perspective.

### **6.1. Collaborative platforms to foster holistic resilience towards wicked and super-wicked problems**

Wicked problems, like the one being investigated in this research, i.e., social exclusion, pose significant challenges in finding solutions owing to their intricate connections with multiple other problems. As evidenced in previous chapters, social inclusion is closely associated with a range of problems, including but not limited to school dropout, unemployment, poverty, crime, societal biases, racial and income discrimination, and more. Additionally, these problems are deeply interconnected and share similar underlying roots (Lejano, 2019), thereby intensifying the inherent blurriness and interconnections across multiple levels of governance.

Due to their inherent complexity, these challenging problems have a noticeable impact on the intricate fabric of modern socioeconomic, cultural, and ecological systems. The wide effects of this phenomenon radiate beyond specific areas and permeate multiple facets of society (Ungar, 2011). The complex interplay among these problems highlights the pressing need for holistic approaches to addressing them as well as innovative strategies that go beyond conventional hierarchical and static governance structures, which may lead to policy resistance (Bianchi, 2021; 2022). In this perspective, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with its goals and targets, provides a comprehensive global framework for tackling such problems and recognizes the importance of international cooperation as well as the need for local action. However, the formation of macroscale and static plans by international institutions and governments is not followed by consistent local implementation.

Therefore, the localization of the UN 2030 Agenda (Perry et al., 2021) is of utmost importance, as it acknowledges that the effects of complex problems are often most strongly experienced at the local level and that local solutions, in the long run, may have effects on a global level.

The limitations of a static approach that focuses solely on individual problems necessitate a broader perspective when considering local solutions. Policymakers must recognize the

complex structure of cause-and-effect relationships that exist between various phenomena and adopt a holistic view of the system as a whole. This entails acknowledging the interplay between socioeconomic, cultural, and ecological subsystems and understanding the correlations that exist among them. By embracing this holistic approach, policymakers can effectively address the complex challenges faced by local communities. To ensure long-term resilience and sustainable growth, it is of utmost importance to adopt a holistic approach that encompasses all the aforementioned subsystems and considers the ecosystem as an interconnected, interdependent, and co-evolving entity (Berkes and Folke, 1998; Folke, 2006). By embracing a holistic perspective, one acknowledges the intricate relationships and dynamics within the ecosystem, recognizing that the well-being of each subsystem is intricately linked to the overall resilience of the system as a whole. This perspective aligns with the notion that resilience is not an isolated attribute, but rather a collective asset that emerges from the interactions and feedbacks among various parts of the ecosystem. The concept of holistic resilience emphasizes the need to transcend reductionist approaches that focus solely on individual subsystems or isolated components. Instead, it calls for a broader understanding that acknowledges the complex web of interactions and dependencies within the ecosystem. By adopting this perspective, one recognizes that changes in one subsystem can have cascading effects on other subsystems, potentially leading to either enhanced or diminished resilience. Furthermore, the notion of a co-evolving ecosystem underscores the dynamic nature of ecological systems, wherein the various components continuously interact and adapt in response to changing conditions. This perspective recognizes that resilience is not a static state, but rather a dynamic process that requires ongoing adaptation and evolution. By embracing this understanding, one can better appreciate the importance of fostering adaptive capacity and promoting strategies that enable the ecosystem to respond and recover from disturbances. In conclusion, striving for holistic resilience entails recognizing the interconnectedness and interdependence of subsystems within the ecosystem. By adopting a comprehensive perspective and acknowledging the co-evolving nature of the ecosystem, one can better understand the complex dynamics at play and develop strategies that promote long-term resilience and sustainable growth. This approach is crucial for navigating the challenges posed by an ever-changing and chaotic world.

The successful functioning of any system necessitates the establishment of an ongoing and continuous interaction among the various actors involved. This interaction serves as a crucial foundation for the effective operation and coordination of the system's components. By fostering ongoing engagement and communication, the actors can collectively address challenges, share information, exchange ideas, and collaborate toward achieving common

goals. This ongoing interaction among the system's actors is therefore indispensable for ensuring the smooth and efficient functioning of the system as a whole. The aforementioned interactions can be effectively characterized as collaborative endeavors, wherein the involved parties conscientiously navigate and oversee their interdependence. This notion aligns with the theoretical framework proposed by Pfeffer and Salancik (2003), who argue that individuals and entities engage in a reciprocal and interdependent relationship, wherein they jointly manage their reliance on one another.

Collaboration, as elucidated by Thomson, Perry, and Miller (2009), is a multifaceted and intricate process wherein independent stakeholders engage in a dynamic exchange of ideas and perspectives, both formally and informally. This interactive discourse serves as a platform for the collective establishment of regulations and frameworks that govern their interactions and facilitate their deliberations on the problems at hand. It is important to note that collaboration entails the cultivation of shared norms and interrelations that are mutually advantageous to all involved parties. In addition to the aforementioned points, it is important to note that these interactions necessitate a significant degree of trust between the parties involved. Trust plays a pivotal role in facilitating effective communication and collaboration, particularly in complex and intricate goals (O'Leary and Vij, 2012). The establishment of trust is a gradual process that requires individuals to demonstrate reliability, integrity, and competence in their interactions. This can be achieved through consistent and transparent communication, as well as the fulfillment of commitments and obligations. Furthermore, it is worth highlighting that these interactions tend to be more time-consuming compared to other forms of communication. This is primarily due to the need for extensive deliberation, negotiation, and consensus-building process. By fostering trust, stakeholders' collaboration may pursue a collective understanding and effectively manage conflicts (Klijn, 2008; Keast et al., 2004). Additionally, by collaborating stakeholders may promote sustainable development through joint creation, production, and evaluation of policies (Bovaird, 2007; Torfing & Ansell, 2017). The effectiveness of collaboration is contingent upon the nature and extent of the interaction involved. Various examples of conceptual plurality can be observed in the realm of collaborative platforms (Ansell & Gash, 2018), participatory platforms (Desouza & Bhagwatwar, 2014), institutional platforms (Sørensen & Torfin, 2019), and digital platforms (Meijer & Boon, 2021).

Collaborative platforms integrate contextual governance at the policy level with the management level, which involves the actual implementation of policies through the actions and interactions of various organizations involved.

Collaborative modes of governance, which lead to the establishment of effective collaborative platforms (Ansell & Gash, 2018), have a triple impact. First and foremost, these platforms facilitate a comprehensive comprehension of the pertinent strategic resources, drivers, outputs, and outcomes associated with sustainability. Furthermore, these entities play a crucial role in fulfilling a public objective within a network governance framework, which would otherwise be challenging to achieve (Emerson, Nabatchi, & Balogh, 2012). Furthermore, Ansell and Gash (2018) argue that another important aspect is the establishment of a robust and enduring framework that can effectively evolve and adjust to address emerging challenges and capitalize on potential opportunities.

The implementation of collaborative platforms has the potential to enhance the accountability system by effectively monitoring inputs, processes, and outcomes within the context of collaborative governance. The implementation of policy networks requires this as a prerequisite (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015; Bianchi, 2022).

Collaborative platforms, which serve as spaces for individuals to engage in collective activities, use a governance strategy that is deeply embedded in the architectural design, to establish a robust framework that governs the interactions, roles, and responsibilities of platform participants. The rules are included in this framework, and the emphasis is on the facilitation, coordination, and enhancement of stakeholder involvement, mobilization, and mediation. According to Ansell (2019), this approach promotes the active participation of multiple groups, the seamless coordination of their efforts, and the enhancement of their capacities. Organizations and institutions can effectively leverage the combined strength and knowledge of stakeholders by using such platforms, enabling a more inclusive and collaborative decision-making process. Furthermore, this approach stresses the significance of mediating conflicts and resolving disagreements among stakeholders, ensuring that their different viewpoints and interests are considered. Overall, the implementation of this approach shows significant potential in terms of increasing effective stakeholder participation and creating mutually beneficial outcomes. A well-structured architectural design enables the continuous reconfiguration, adaption, and customization of collaborative platforms, assuring alignment with the goals and objectives of all stakeholders.

The concept of modularity is extremely important in the context of collaboration. It is a critical component that contributes to the efficacy and efficiency of collaborative efforts. The split of a complex structure into smaller, self-contained units or modules, each with separate features or components, is referred to as modularity. These modules can be created independently and then integrated. According to Ansell (2019), the definition of collaborative platforms as modular is reliant on their components performing discrete

functions. This viewpoint holds that the modularity of such platforms is dependent on the discrete and specialized roles that their different components play. However, it is worth mentioning that these platforms have a remarkable ability to grow and assimilate more stakeholders or generate unique spin-offs while keeping the system's essential architecture intact.

## **6.2. Research contribution to the field**

The primary goal of this research was to investigate the complex phenomenon of social exclusion that permeates some peripheral urban neighborhoods. This investigation was conducted with a keen focus on the United Nations' 2030 agenda, which serves as a guiding framework for sustainable development. The overarching aim was to delve into the multifaceted dimensions of social exclusion and shed light on its negative consequences on marginalized communities residing in these urban peripheries. Furthermore, this study sought to explore the potential effectiveness of collaborative initiatives among diverse stakeholders in effectively addressing social exclusion. By fostering a comprehensive understanding of the underlying dynamics and complexities of social exclusion, this research aimed to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and provide valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and other relevant actors involved in the pursuit of social equity and inclusive urban development. To achieve these goals, it was adopted a qualitative and quantitative approach. Significant literature reviews were conducted to establish a theoretical foundation and identify relevant conceptual frameworks. Additionally, empirical data was collected through interviews, and observations, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of the lived experiences and perspectives of individuals directly impacted by social exclusion in peripheral urban neighborhoods. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the broader discourse on social exclusion and inform evidence-based policy interventions. By elucidating the potential impact of collaborative efforts among various stakeholders, this study aims to provide actionable recommendations for policymakers and practitioners seeking to address social exclusion and foster inclusive urban environments. Ultimately, it is hoped that the insights gained from this research will contribute to the realization of the UN 2030 agenda's vision of sustainable development and social equity in peripheral urban neighborhoods. The present study constitutes an addition to the existing corpus of knowledge within the domains of performance management and governance, urban planning, and sustainable development. By delving into these multifaceted areas, this research effectively enhances our understanding and comprehension of the subject matter at hand. The primary objective of this research is to make a valuable

contribution to the existing theoretical framework pertaining to trust, active citizenship, human capital, and collaborative governance. This will be achieved through an analysis of the current connection between collaboration and wicked problems, with a specific focus on the intricate issue of social exclusion. By delving into this complex subject, this study seeks to expand our understanding of the intricate dynamics at play within collaborative efforts, particularly in the context of addressing wicked problems.

The establishment of collaboration among multiple actors is an indispensable and pivotal component in guaranteeing the holistic resilience of local communities. This imperative facet plays a crucial role in fostering the ability of these communities to withstand and recover from various problems. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, such as government entities, non-profit organizations, community leaders, and residents, a collaborative approach can be harnessed to address multifaceted issues and enhance the overall resilience of local communities. Through the collective efforts and coordinated actions of these actors, a more robust and sustainable framework can be established, enabling communities to effectively navigate and adapt to a wide range of social, economic, and environmental disruptions. Thus, the establishment of collaboration among multiple actors emerges as an imperative and indispensable strategy in the pursuit of holistic resilience for local communities. By effectively integrating the multifaceted socio-economic, cultural, and ecological subsystems, a viable and attainable pathway towards the establishment and nurturing of sustainability emerges. This holistic approach acknowledges the interconnectedness and interdependence of these subsystems, recognizing their collective influence on the overall sustainability of a given system or society. By synergistically aligning these subsystems, a comprehensive framework can be constructed, enabling the harmonious coexistence and mutual reinforcement of socio-economic, cultural, and ecological dimensions. This integrative approach not only facilitates a more nuanced understanding of sustainability but also provides a robust foundation for the implementation of sustainable practices and policies. In the context of the current research, it is imperative to transcend the narrow perspective of examining isolated components and instead embrace a comprehensive understanding of the entire system as a cohesive entity. By doing so, we can effectively grasp the intricate dynamics and interrelationships that shape the wicked problem at hand, enabling us to develop more nuanced and effective solutions. To effectively address these multifaceted issues, it is imperative to undergo a transformative paradigm shift in prevailing social and cultural norms. As has been expounded upon in the preceding chapters, it becomes clear that the importance lies in effecting a profound alteration in the existing cultural and value systems. This is deemed necessary to facilitate a significant



transition and effectively tackle the complex issues at hand. The phenomenon of cultural transition is characterized by a protracted and gradual progression, as opposed to a swift and instantaneous occurrence, thereby demanding a substantial allocation of both time and effort. Based on the empirical evidence derived from the conducted research, it can be posited that the effective resolution of social exclusion mandates the concomitant governance of a multitude of intricately interconnected problems. These encompass, albeit not completely, crime, school dropout, societal biases, discriminatory practices, and a plethora of other issues. To effectively promote social inclusion within the communities under investigation, it is imperative to initiate a transformative process that entails a fundamental shift in the mental models held by both residents and external actors. This shift necessitates a comprehensive reconfiguration of the underlying principles that shape their behaviors. The primary aim of the project at hand is to thoroughly investigate and analyze the intricate interdependencies that exist between active citizenship, collaborative governance, and cultural transition. The overarching goal is to foster and enhance holistic resilience. By delving into these interconnected themes, the project seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of the multifaceted dynamics at play and their potential implications for promoting resilience. The project seeks to shed light on the intricate relationships between active citizenship, collaborative governance, and cultural transition, ultimately contributing to the broader body of knowledge in this field. An analysis of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda from this particular standpoint carries substantial importance due to its overarching goal of addressing pressing societal challenges. The research presented herein is willing to contribute to the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by shedding light on a crucial aspect that must be taken into account to successfully achieve the desired outcomes. Specifically, this study emphasizes the essential importance of recognizing and understanding the intricate interconnectedness of various goals within the agenda, as well as the inherent cultural aspects that permeate individuals, communities, and nations. By acknowledging the intricate net of interdependencies among the different goals, this research underscores the need for a holistic and integrated approach to sustainable development. It highlights that the attainment of one goal cannot be pursued in isolation, as the success of each objective is intricately linked to the progress made in other areas. Consequently, a comprehensive understanding of the interconnections between goals is essential for devising effective strategies and policies that can yield the desired outcomes. Furthermore, this research underscores the significance of cultural aspects in the pursuit of sustainable development. It recognizes that individuals, communities, and nations are not homogenous entities, but rather are shaped by their unique cultural contexts. These cultural aspects

encompass a wide range of factors, including but not limited to beliefs, values, traditions, and social norms. Understanding and appreciating these cultural dimensions is crucial for the successful implementation of sustainable development initiatives, as they influence the attitudes, behaviors, and decision-making processes of individuals and communities. By emphasizing the imperative of considering the interconnectedness of goals and the cultural aspects inherent in individuals, communities, and nations, this research provides valuable insights that can inform policy-making and implementation processes. It underscores the need for a comprehensive and inclusive approach that takes into account the complex dynamics at play within the sustainable development agenda. Ultimately, by integrating these considerations into the decision-making processes, to attain resilience, a profound and substantial transformation becomes imperative, as the attainment of resilience is contingent upon the implementation of such a transformative process.

Lastly, the goal of this research was to illustrate the practical use of a Dynamic Performance Governance framework in the conceptualization, development, and implementation of lasting social inclusion initiatives. Furthermore, the related goal is to underscore the inherent potential of employing this particular approach as a viable mechanism to foster a culture of collaboration and mutual comprehension among diverse stakeholders who often hold disparate and conflicting interests.

### **6.3. Research limitations**

This research utilizes the DPG framework as a methodological anchor to primarily establish the boundaries of the model. It is crucial to emphasize that the use of this model does not indicate an absolute endorsement of its theoretical implementation. Placing excessive emphasis on the theoretical aspect in isolation may lead to a potentially hazardous mechanistic assumption that is disconnected from practical considerations (Omong, 2021). The effectiveness of the model should not rely solely on a mechanistic basis. Theoretical applications, although important, may not ensure the achievement of desired results. Therefore, it is crucial to conduct a thorough examination of the study and its related models, going beyond the limitations initially set forth. The analytical endeavor requires the incorporation of relevant variables that are currently not included in the model, resulting in a concentric structure. Although these additional variables were not initially included, they play a crucial role in the model's overall functionality, improving its ability to accomplish overarching goals.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge a significant constraint of the research, which relates to the lack of quantitative data regarding the San Filippo Neri neighborhood in Palermo. The lack of up-to-date and comprehensive data from the Municipality of Palermo and the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) highlights a notable gap in the research. The lack of crucial population-related data, such as the size of neighborhoods' populations and information on various demographic groups and educational achievements, is a result of obstacles associated with the widespread presence of numerous illicit activities taking place in residential units. The lack of available data significantly impedes the development and implementation of system dynamics simulation models. Such limitation was also highlighted by other scholars that have investigated other neighborhoods in Palermo (Omong, 2021; Le, 2022). However, the study effectively addresses this challenge by utilizing conceptual models and qualitative data obtained from interviews, which enables the production of insightful analyses.

There are two significant limitations that should be taken into account: the level of willingness exhibited by stakeholders to participate in interviews, and the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The first introduces a subjective element and the possibility of bias, while the second emphasizes the study's susceptibility to external and unforeseen factors. In conclusion, it is important to exercise caution when generalizing the findings to a wider national and global urban context due to its specific geographical focus on the San Filippo Neri neighborhood in Palermo and the Middle East neighborhood in Baltimore. Moreover, it is essential to emphasize the importance of exercising caution when generalizing the results of this study to different contexts. The cautionary approach is particularly warranted due to the nuanced nature of both tangible and intangible shared strategic resources. Elements such as culture, cultural heritage sites, history, language, civic mindedness, and traditions are essential components within the contexts being investigated. These elements play significant roles in shaping the distinct identity of a particular place. It is crucial to acknowledge the unique characteristics present in these resources, as they are frequently tailored to specific regions and communities. The interplay of these resources not only enhances the uniqueness of a specific setting but also impacts the dynamics of interactions within that environment. Consequently, to apply study findings to different geographical contexts, it is crucial to have an in-depth comprehension of the complex connections between these resources and the local identity. This understanding is essential to ensure that any broader applications take into account contextual differences appropriately.

#### **6.4. Future directions**

Due to the broad and complex nature of research within this particular domain, it becomes imperative for forthcoming research to delve into a wide array of experiences hailing from various geographical locations across the globe. This comprehensive approach is crucial to thoroughly investigate the root causes that serve as catalysts for social exclusion. In addition to the aforementioned considerations, it would be highly beneficial to delve into the use of a Dynamic Performance Management & Governance framework to analyze and contextualize these problems. This approach entails an in-depth investigation of the intricate cause-and-effect relationships that underpin these challenges, while concurrently highlighting the strategic resources and performance drivers that are necessary for achieving the desired outcomes. By adopting this approach, a more holistic understanding of the problems at hand can be attained, thereby paving the way for more effective and efficient problem-solving strategies. It is imperative to investigate the potential benefits of this particular approach for a diverse range of stakeholders, encompassing organizations, policy practitioners, researchers, and facilitators. By conducting an in-depth analysis of the advantages that may arise from adopting this approach, we can gain valuable insights into its effectiveness and relevance within different contexts. This investigation will enable us to discern the potential positive outcomes and impacts that this approach may have on the aforementioned stakeholders, thereby facilitating a more informed decision-making process. The achievement of integrating theoretical and practical aspects in neighborhoods, and urban areas can be effectively pursued through the implementation of comprehensive case studies or comparative analyses. By employing these research approaches, scholars and practitioners can delve into the intricate dynamics of urban environments, exploring the multifaceted interplay between theoretical frameworks and practical applications. Looking at specific contexts enables scholars to closely examine the intricate interplay between theoretical concepts and their practical manifestations. By immersing themselves in a specific context, researchers can gain valuable insights into the challenges faced. A Dynamic Performance Governance (DPG) approach provides a valuable framework for understanding the intricate and ever-evolving relationship between management and governance within and across organizations. By delving into the complexities of this interplay, DPG offers a comprehensive lens through which to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of decision-making processes and the broader governance structures that shape them. At its core, DPG recognizes that management and governance are not isolated entities, but rather interconnected components that mutually influence and shape one another. It acknowledges

that effective management practices are contingent upon the presence of robust governance mechanisms, while governance structures rely on competent management to translate strategic objectives into tangible outcomes. By adopting a dynamic perspective, DPG acknowledges that management and This statement effectively highlight the inherent capacity for management and governance to harmoniously coexist within a mutually inclusive framework. Such a perspective underscores the significance of establishing a cohesive structure that allows for the effective coordination and alignment of management practices and governance principles. Consequently, this recognition of the potential for coexistence within a shared framework serves as a testament to the importance of fostering a holistic approach that leverages the strengths of both management and governance to optimize organizational performance and ensure sustainable success. Therefore, it can be inferred that a DPG approach may function as a pivotal mechanism that facilitates the establishment of intricate interconnections among diverse components or contexts within a given system. This implies that the DPG plays a crucial role in fostering the integration and harmonization of various elements, thereby enhancing the overall coherence and functionality of the system in question. When it comes to policy design and implementation, it is imperative to adopt a comprehensive and all-encompassing approach. The undertaking of a comprehensive and intricate analysis possesses the inherent capacity to fundamentally transform and reconfigure a multitude of perspectives, thereby fortifying and enhancing a wide array of policies that pertain to the crucial domain of social inclusion and its sustainability.

To further enhance the research in the future, it is recommended that the utilization of system dynamics simulation models be employed. These models should be firmly grounded in diverse experiences and contexts, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. However, it is crucial to note that the availability of sufficient data is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of such models. By incorporating these advanced simulation techniques, researchers can delve deeper into the complexities of the subject, gaining valuable insights and generating more accurate predictions. This approach holds great potential for advancing the field and contributing to the body of knowledge in a meaningful and impactful manner. Simulation models possess the inherent capability to comprehensively capture and aptly demonstrate the profound significance of a myriad of additional variables. The study conducted shed light on the multifaceted nature of social exclusion, particularly focusing on its social dimensions. However, it is important to acknowledge that there exist various other social concepts that are intricately linked to social exclusion, yet have not been fully explored. These concepts encompass a wide range of

societal phenomena, including but not limited to active citizenship, crime rates, and school dropout rates, these might require an in-depth analysis through different co-models. The present research serves as a foundational framework for delving into supplementary social constructs that are intricately intertwined with the multifaceted phenomenon of social exclusion, thus presenting promising prospects for effectively tackling this complex and challenging problem.

## **6.5. Conclusions**

This research discusses in detail how holistic resilience towards social exclusion can be fostered through collaborative governance. In doing this, it was shown how a Dynamic Performance Governance approach may support decision-makers, practitioners, and other stakeholders in identifying, designing, and implementing sustainable social inclusion policies in the San Filippo Neri neighborhood and the Middle East neighborhood.

The research unfolded as follows:

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the research, including the scope of the work and the statement of the problem. The problem is described in terms of its nature and known dimensions, which helps to contextualize the study within urban settings. The research goals, aims, objectives, and research questions that guided this study were subsequently presented. The subsequent sections of this study delve into the identification of the study's significance, aiming to illuminate the dynamics of social inclusion, social exclusion, and segregation. Furthermore, this study provides insights into the policy agenda and explores how it can be improved through the active participation of stakeholders. The research makes a valuable contribution to the field of sustainability and resilience. Lastly, the significance of the Dynamic Performance Governance framework in the field is emphasized. The Dynamic Performance Governance approach is described as an innovative method that helps stakeholders identify the cause-and-effect relationships that drive social exclusion and collaborative governance. This approach can assist stakeholders in finding collaborative solutions to achieve long-term results and promote resilience.

This exemplifies the potential structure of coexistence between management and governance at the local level. The purpose of this system is to identify and establish coordination mechanisms among different departments within local area administration. Additionally, it serves as a means for effectively managing collaborative efforts between organizations at

the local level. In summary, this research makes a valuable contribution to the existing body of literature on collaborative governance and sustainability.

The study proceeds by emphasizing its focus on examining different aspects of these neighborhoods, such as their socioeconomic conditions, demographic characteristics, and urban development patterns. This study seeks to enhance our comprehension of the dynamics that shape urban environments in various geographical contexts by examining the distinctive characteristics and challenges encountered in these peripheral areas. To achieve this goal, two neighborhoods were examined and subsequently presented. In conclusion, the final section of Chapter 1 provides a concise overview of the thesis's structure, serving as a snapshot of the study at hand.

Chapter 2 centers on the existing literature pertaining to wicked and super-wicked problems. Furthermore, this study involves an examination of the United Nations' 2030 agenda and the process of implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the local level. Moreover, the complex notions of poverty and social exclusion are being discussed. By exploring these multifaceted subjects, the chapter has facilitated comprehension of the wicked problems under consideration. Furthermore, this study examines the collaborative governance theory and situates it within the larger framework of the transition from the conventional Old Public Administration model to the emerging field of new public governance. The purpose of this chapter was to analyze the theoretical framework to provide insight into the intricate dynamics and complexities associated with the transition toward a more collaborative approach.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology employed to carry out the research. This analysis focuses on the broad framework of Dynamic Performance Management (DPM) and the narrow framework of Dynamic Performance Governance (DPG). The text demonstrates the applicability of the DPM & DPG frameworks in the development and execution of policies. It also provides examples of how these frameworks can be effectively utilized in the context of urban governance. The fourth section of the study illustrates the potential application of the DPM & DPG frameworks in facilitating sustainable performance within inter-organizational contexts. In this study, a particular section is dedicated to examining the tools utilized by DPM & DPG derived from Systems Dynamics, with a section devoted to the recurring patterns of behavior. Chapter 3 also encompassed an exploration of the research design, techniques employed for data collection and analysis, and a thorough examination of the ethical considerations that were considered. In addition, this chapter explored the

important elements of sampling, including size, technique, and selection process, which played a crucial role in ensuring the accuracy and dependability of the study's results.

Chapter 4 delves into the case study of the San Filippo Neri neighborhood, offering insights into the complex dynamics of social exclusion within this peripheral area in Palermo. An essential element of this chapter is the incorporation of the Dynamic Performance Governance Chart, which functions as a conceptual framework that provides a valuable tool for comprehending and situating the diverse dimensions of social exclusion in this specific locality. The author utilizes this chart to offer a thorough and nuanced analysis of the multiple factors that contribute to social exclusion. In doing so, they seek to enhance our comprehension of the intricate dynamics associated with this marginalized community. Following this section, an analysis of the primary cause-and-effect relationships of the issue at hand was conducted utilizing a Causal Loop Diagram.

Chapter 5 of this study focuses on analyzing the Middle East neighborhood located in the city of Baltimore. Consistent with the preceding chapter, the author utilized a Dynamic Performance Governance Chart to look at the primary cause-and-effect relationships of the issue at hand through the application of a Causal Loop Diagram.

The two charts as well as the diagrams in both chapters provided illustrate the similar generic structures of stock-and-flow modeling. These models specifically highlight the various factors that contribute to the social exclusion phenomenon.

Chapter 6 of this study provides an analysis and presents the findings of the research. It also explores the potential of place-based collaborative platforms to effectively support socio-economic and cultural transition. By doing so, these platforms can contribute to enhancing holistic resilience in the face of prevailing complex challenges.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A. Key Informant Interview Guide – Palermo

#### **KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE**

Dear Respondent,

I am asking you to answer these questions because you are a key actor in the neighborhood. Your information will be kept confidential and will only be used for this research. I would like to highlight that you have the freedom to choose when you want to end the interview, and please feel comfortable to speak openly.

#### **General information on Palermo and the San Filippo Neri neighborhood**

- What is the population size of Palermo?
- How many people live in the San Filippo Neri neighborhood?
- How many immigrants live in the neighborhood and more in general in Palermo?
- What are the three main achievements of the Palermo City leadership in transforming Palermo?
- What is the size of San Filippo Neri neighborhood and of Palermo?
- What were some of the main problems that both San Filippo Neri neighborhood and Palermo faced in the past?
- How were these problems managed?
- Which of those problems still exist?
- How can we enhance the attractiveness the San Filippo Neri neighborhood?
- What specific areas has the municipality focused on improving in the neighborhood?

#### **The exclusion phenomenon in the San Filippo Neri neighborhood**

- What are the historical roots of the San Filippo Neri neighborhood's social exclusion problem?
- What are the primary causes of social exclusion?
- What steps were taken to address such a problem?
- What can be done to address such a problem?

## **Framing the relationships between social inclusion, active citizenship, and collaborative governance**

- How does the community participate in decision-making for projects in this area?
- Why do you think some people may not participate as actively as others?
- How can we enhance active citizenship in this area?
- What measures are being taken to promote social inclusion in the neighborhood?  
Do you think there were some accomplishments?
- Who is responsible for ensuring social inclusion among stakeholders?
- Who is the most socially excluded group in this neighborhood?
- Which groups of people have received help with social inclusion so far?
- What challenges are there that affect social inclusion in the neighborhood?
- How can social inclusion be improved?
- What are some common examples of networks in this community?
- How do these networks work?
- How can collaborations in this area be improved?
- Are there any projects or programs where the Municipality of Palermo and the community are working on together?
- How is civil society contributing in this area?

## **The impact of driver participation on generating sustainable outcomes**

- Who are the important individuals or associations involved in the San Filippo Neri neighborhood?
- Which stakeholders have the least representation in decision-making for community outcomes?
- Why do you believe that these players are underrepresented?
- Which forums encourage stakeholders to participate in community initiatives?
- How are community projects evaluated in this neighborhood?
- What causes a growing social distance between decisionmakers and specific segments of the population?
- How can we promote greater social inclusion?
- What challenges are currently impacting community involvement in this neighborhood?



- What is the role of citizens and community members in providing services in this community?
- What causes citizens to mistrust the government?
- How can the government gain more trust from citizens?
- How do you access information from the municipality administration?
- What can be done to help marginalized groups in the community develop more trust in the government?

**How dynamic performance governance can contribute to strategic plans that foster sustainable outcomes**

- What resources does the community have that can be used to improve quality of life?
- What are the main goals you would like to see accomplished in the area?

**Thank You for Your Time**

## **KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE**

Dear Respondent,

I am asking you to answer these questions because you are a key actor in the neighborhood. Your information will be kept confidential and will only be used for this research. I would like to highlight that you have the freedom to choose when you want to end the interview, and please feel comfortable to speak openly.

### **General information on Baltimore and the Middle East neighborhood**

- What is the population size of Baltimore?
- How many people live in the Middle East neighborhood?
- How many immigrants live in the neighborhood and more in general in Baltimore?
- What are the three main achievements of the Baltimore City leadership in transforming Baltimore and the Middle East neighborhood?
- What is the size of Middle East neighborhood and of Baltimore?
- How many houses need refurbishment in the neighborhood?
- In which year did the regeneration of the area start?
- What were some of the main problems that both the Middle East neighborhood and Baltimore faced in the past?
- How were these problems managed?
- Which of those problems still exist?
- How can we enhance the attractiveness the neighborhood?
- What specific areas has the municipality focused on improving in the neighborhood?

### **The exclusion phenomenon in Baltimore**

- What are the historical roots of the social exclusion problem in Middle East neighborhood?
- What can you tell me about the red lining?
- What can you tell me about the so-called black butterfly?
- What are the primary causes of social exclusion?
- What steps were taken to address such a problem?
- What can be done to address such a problem?

## **Framing the relationships between social inclusion, active citizenship, and collaborative governance**

- How does the community participate in decision-making for projects in this area?
- Why do you think some people may not participate as actively as others?
- How can we enhance active citizenship in this area?
- What measures are being taken to promote social inclusion in the neighborhood?  
Do you think there were some accomplishments?
- Who is responsible for ensuring social inclusion among stakeholders?
- Who is the most socially excluded group in this neighborhood?
- Which groups of people have received help with social inclusion so far?
- What challenges are there that affect social inclusion in the neighborhood?
- How can social inclusion be improved?
- What are some common examples of networks in this community?
- How do these networks work?
- How can collaborations in this area be improved?
- Are there any projects or programs where the Municipality of Baltimore and the community are working on together?
- How is civil society contributing in this area?

## **How participation may affect drivers which in turn generate sustainable outcomes**

- Who are the important individuals or associations involved in the San Filippo Neri neighborhood?
- Which stakeholders have the least representation in decision-making for community outcomes?
- Why do you believe that these players are underrepresented?
- Which forums encourage stakeholders to participate in community initiatives?
- How are community projects evaluated in this neighborhood?
- What causes a growing social distance between decisionmakers and specific segments of the population?
- How can we promote greater social inclusion?
- What challenges are currently impacting community involvement in this neighborhood?

- What is the role of citizens and community members in providing services in this community?
- What causes citizens to mistrust the government?
- How can the government gain more trust from citizens?
- How do you access information from the municipality administration?
- What can be done to help marginalized groups in the community develop more trust in the government?

**How dynamic performance governance can contribute to strategic plans that foster sustainable outcomes**

- What resources does the community have that can be used to improve quality of life?
- What are the main goals you would like to see accomplished in the area?

**Thank Your for Your Time**